

# THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY



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## OFF STAGE AND ON

BY SACHA GUITRY

I WAS born on February 21, 1885. There is nothing in this revelation to move the reader to tears, but it must be agreed that for me this is a date.

When I came into the world I was exceedingly red. My parents looked at me with fright and then at each other with sadness. Finally, my father said to my mother, 'It's a monster, but no matter; we'll love it just the same.'

But I ought to tell you why I came into the world.

René de Pont-Jest, onetime officer of the French navy, novelist, journalist, distinguished in appearance, subtle in mind, a skillful blade, a lover of women and of gambling, — a type of Parisian now vanished, with his white gaiters and checkered trousers, — used to give masked balls four times a season in his house in the rue Condorcet. Everybody who was anybody in Paris crowded to them. In the course of the evening Christine Nilsson would chant, Sarah Bernhardt would enchant, Serpette would be at the piano, Mounet-Sully would read verse, and Coquelin the

younger would recite his first monologues. One evening Mounet-Sully provided a surprise for the guests. He brought with him a young man still doing his military service who was not immediately recognized and who conquered them all by the fashion in which he recited *La Mort du Loup*.

'Who is that astonishing young man?'

'Why, that's Guityry. You know, the chap who played the lead in *Le Fils de Coralie*.'

'So it is!'

He was welcomed, acclaimed, he stayed to supper, and he was urged to come again the next furlough. He promised, and indeed he was ready to swear he'd come back. He came back in January; he came again in February; but when he asked for a fourth furlough, he was refused. He went 'absent without leave.' The matter was serious, but René de Pont-Jest intervened in person. Several people bestirred themselves. Louise Abbéma knew Guityry's commanding officer. Sarah Bernhardt knew the Minister of War. The thing was arranged.

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But for him to have gone absent without leave, to have risked imprisonment, there must have been a reason. All the intimates of the household — though not, of course, Monsieur de Pont-Jest — knew that the reason was Mademoiselle de Pont-Jest. She was twenty years old; she was beauty itself; they adored each other. When his military service was ended, he asked for her hand and was categorically refused, three times over. Monsieur de Pont-Jest did not want his daughter to marry an actor; he did not want her to, but in 1882 my father and mother were married at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, in London.

Lucien Guitry had been on tour in England for four days with Sarah Bernhardt and her handsome husband, Damala, when Mademoiselle de Pont-Jest joined him. In his memoirs he says: —

'Oh, that trip to London, arriving on a Saturday night at six! Everything was shut, and the next day was Sunday! And the day after was Shrove Monday! Tuesday was the Queen's birthday! Thank God, on Wednesday I found something to do!'

That Wednesday was his wedding day. His witness was Sarah Bernhardt. Thirty-seven years later, when I married Yvonne Printemps, my witness was Sarah Bernhardt.

I ought to say a word about my father's situation at this time. Born in Paris in 1860, he matriculated at the Conservatoire at the age of fifteen years and emerged two years later with two prizes — neither of them a first. He won the second prize for tragedy and the second also for comedy. The firsts had been awarded that year to Théophile Barral, to that worthy Barral who played bits for years at the Comédie-Française and later character parts in the Boulevard theatres. He was a good enough actor, as a matter of fact, but still, we must agree that

the Conservatoire is a rather comic place. No more comic than other schools, but not any less, really.

The Comédie-Française, having as a result the right to my father's services, called for them. Even in those days he declined the honor. He thus became subject to a fine of 10,000 francs, a verdict he accepted in order to enter the Gymnase, where he was engaged straight out of school to play the leading part in a new play, *Le Fils de Coralie*, which afforded him a brilliant début. He was playing at the same time the rôle of Armand Duval in *La Dame aux Camélias*, and embarking upon a magnificent career, when suddenly Montigny, the director of the theatre, died. My father, who had the warmest affection for Montigny and considered him a great producer, within a few months was able to leave the Gymnase. He had signed a contract with the imperial theatres of Russia so advantageous as to permit him to buy himself out of a contract with the Gymnase which had bound him against his will to continue with Montigny's antipathetic successor. Already in his twenties he displayed his characteristic inability to work with anybody he disliked.

In point of fact, the marriage he contracted at the age of twenty-two had something to do with his decision, for, though that decision condemned the young couple to nine years of exile in Russia, at least it ensured them a livelihood — ensured all four a livelihood, for there were soon four of us. When I came into the world my brother was already there waiting for me. True, he had not been waiting long: he was born on March 5, 1884, I on the twenty-first of February following. You can calculate for yourself that we were twins for twelve days every year.

There you have it — why I was born, why I was born in St. Petersburg, and

why, during the first five years of my life, I spent my winters in Russia and my summers in France.

## II

It was in St. Petersburg, in 1890, that I made my first appearance. I could n't say exactly that I played a part. The truth is that I took part in a pantomime in one act which my father had got up in collaboration with a great Russian actor named Davidoff. This pantomime was performed at the imperial palace in the presence of Alexander III. My father played Pierrot; I was Pierrot junior.

It had been arranged that we should stay to supper with the Tsar after the show. I was put on his right. Opposite me sat a young man in a white uniform who was later to become Nicholas II. My father had coached me carefully for the supper: 'Do this. . . . Don't do so-and-so. . . . And above all, you must n't leave anything on your plate — therefore, don't let them serve you much.' But a terrible thing happened. When the cheese was passed, and it was my turn to help myself, I did it so awkwardly that there fell on my plate a lump of Gruyère as big as a box of dominoes. The servant was about to relieve me of this excessive portion when the Emperor nudged his elbow, and the cheese was left. I raised my eyes and met my father's pitiless glance, which seemed to say, 'Remember what I told you: leave nothing on your plate.' I attacked my Gruyère in the midst of a stubborn, frightening silence. At the fifth mouthful a great burst of laughter, led by the Emperor, put an end to my torture. I had learned my lesson.

When, after an interminable separation of thirteen years, my father came for the first time to see me act, I was playing in *Deburau* at the Vaudeville. Twenty-eight years had gone by since

my début in St. Petersburg, and he had not seen me on the stage since that evening. Twenty-eight years — and here I was playing Pierrot again! But this time it was I who played the father.

If I were asked at what age I began to feel that my vocation lay in the theatre, I should answer that when I was five years old I was convinced that some day I would do what my father did — only, I did n't know what my father did. It goes without saying that I could n't guess what a profession was, nor could I know the exact meaning of the word 'career'; but I could not doubt that whatever my father did must be passionately interesting; and I was absorbed by the thought of it. He had had made for me copies of certain of his theatre costumes, and I loved to rig myself out in them. I had Louis the Eleventh's cloak and felt hat, Hamlet's doublet and hose, Tabin's jacket, and a Punch as big — or as little — as myself. I would stand poor Punch up behind a towel rack and make him play Polonius, and I killed him so often that I ended by destroying him. I used to love to recite certain ranting monologues which my father had taught me out of Casimir Delavigne's *Louis XI*.

*Qu'il me revienne encore un murmure, une plainte,  
Je mets la main sur vous, et mon doute s'éclaircit  
Je vous envoie à Dieu pour obtenir merci.<sup>1</sup>*

Dressed up in one of these costumes, nothing seemed to me more fun than to burst into the drawing-room with a terrible scowl on my face. It was my ambition to provoke laughter by surprise. I may say that in this I have not changed.

Those who witnessed these apparitions always laughed with my father

<sup>1</sup> Let me but hear another murmur, one complaint, I'll bring my hand down on you, and, my uncertainty once cleared up, I'll send you to God to look for mercy. — EDITOR

and often cried out, 'How much like you he looks!' The idea that I resembled my father obsessed me, and the desire I had to resemble him more and more led entirely naturally to the desire to do what he did when I grew up. But what *did* he do?

I used to watch him live with amazement. What was there about him that others lacked? It was simply that he was twenty years younger than anybody else. He was a very young man, and it is only now, thinking about it, that I realize it. But why did he seem so different from the others? What was there in him that was so precious? Obviously, his future!

He would rush to table, lunch in twelve minutes, and rush off, saying, 'By God, I'm going to be late again!' He was always afraid of being late; yet I knew it was to his work he was going. When he came home in the evening he would sometimes say, 'It's all right; I'm satisfied. I believe it's going to go very well.'

Then we would dine, and at table he would speak of his friends. I knew them very well, had seen them often in our house; from time to time they had brought me toys. But the way he spoke of them bewildered me.

'I nearly died laughing at Hitemans in two. . . . Lina Munte is doing well now, but she was laying it on for a few days. . . . Lorteur's afraid he'll go up in his lines next Tuesday.'

I had finally learned that there was something special about Tuesday. Later I discovered that it was the opening night at the Mikhailovsky Theatre. On those nights my father would dine even more hurriedly than usual. He was always nervous, but never depressed. Every now and again his face would change. His thick eyebrows would contract in a frown and he would cry out, 'My lord, you are a nobleman and I am but a commoner, yet I dare tell you that any man who

insults a woman is a coward!' A moment later he would be accusing himself aloud of abominable crimes, there before the servants; and the only thing that consoled me a little was that it did not seem to astonish them at all. Of a sudden his glance, which had been concentrated, terrifying, threatening, would become unbelievably gentle. He would look at me tenderly and say in a sweet voice, 'Clementine, I would give my life for a kiss from your lips!'

Obviously, I could not understand that he was going over his lines, I had no notion that the most magnificent career the stage can offer was opening before this fortunate and enchanting man who had just kissed me and left; but how I loved him, how handsome I thought him, how much I liked him, this young man who was my father!

Once, as I was being put to bed, I said to my nurse, 'Where is Papa going this evening?'

She answered, 'He's going to work, and earn some money for you.' Seeing my astonishment, she added, 'Well, he's going to play this evening.'

I fell asleep with the idea that a man could earn money by playing; and I grew up with the idea that 'play' was a synonym for the word 'work.' I have n't changed my idea.

### III

The time came when I had to leave my birthplace, which I was to see again only when on tour twenty years later, and go back to Paris. I don't remember that later Petersburg of 1910, but I see very clearly the city of my childhood. I see our apartment, my father's study, an ivory paper cutter I was afraid of because one day, in jest, I had been threatened with it. (I've just used it to open a letter with.) I see the dining room; I see newspapers printed on pink paper, lying folded on the drawing-room table. I see again the swift



and silent sleighs, the coachmen who seemed to have enormous bottoms because of the fur-lined coats they wore belted in tight about the waist. I see the skaters on the River Neva, their light silhouettes which the wind seemed to bend first to the left, then to the right, then to the left again, like so many pendulums. And I remember best of all the astounding silence of the streets, a silence only troubled momentarily by the muffled hoofs of passing horses and grown even deeper when the horses had passed.

I see the Nevsky Prospekt and the passers-by with their fur collars raised to their ears, their fur hats down over their eyes, their hands deep in their pockets, their mouths shut and noses red, their feet in boots. I see the Emperor's Palace, the Kazan Cathedral, the Alexander Bridge. I see a city all white, pavements hidden under a snow falling so slowly that it seemed to come from just overhead, and falling for hours and hours until it rounded every angle; falling like light itself on bronze statues just where the light falls when it is perpendicular, so that all the statues look as if lighted from above.

My brother Jean was in Paris and already in school. I remember perfectly my arrival. I wore a green velvet suit and a wide beret with a long feather in it. My brother, like all schoolboys, was wearing a black pinafore strapped in at the waist by a leather belt. We looked at each other with some surprise. He had already that bright look of intelligence and humor that later charmed people so; and I can see, in a photograph taken then, that I had already that look of slightly arrested development which I was so long to retain — and probably retain to this day, since people say my childhood portraits are so like me. I remember that our mother pushed us into each other's arms, and that as Jean kissed me sheepishly he whispered in my ear,

'Why do they dress you up like a monkey?'

My father and mother were by then divorced, and it was she, naturally, who had been awarded the custody of the children. It goes without saying that my memory of all this is pretty vague. We could n't realize then, my brother and I, how abnormal our existence was. We felt that something serious in the life of our parents had taken place, but we had no notion of our own misfortune. Not to be able to say to oneself that one remembered one's mother and father at the same table; not to have seen both their faces bent over the bed in which one lay ill — there comes a time when this is a frightful thought. For it is only later that one realizes, and says to oneself, 'I had two parents; I adored them both — but separately. As for a family, what people call a family — I have never known what that was.'

I know a little boy whose parents were divorced while he was still in the cradle. He is being brought up by his father, but is taken to see his mother twice a week. He is growing up in ignorance, understanding nothing. The other day his mother looked him deep in the eyes and said suddenly to him, 'How like your father you are already!' The poor child cried out, 'Do you know Papa?'

Sunday evenings, when I came back to my mother, she would ask now and then whom I had met at Papa's. I see myself one evening, kneeling on my bed, saying my prayers, and my mother questioning me. And I remember this curious dialogue between us: —

I: Our Father, Who art in heaven . . .

MOTHER: Who was dining at your papa's?

I: There was a nobleman. . . . Hallowed be Thy name . . .

MOTHER: A nobleman?

I: Yes, mama. . . . Thy kingdom come.

MOTHER: A nobleman? Jean de Reszke?

I: No. . . . Thy will be done . . .

MOTHER: Georges de Porto-Riche?

I: No. . . . On earth, as it is in heaven.

MOTHER: De Najac?

And my mother pronounced a dozen names of my father's friends, all bearing the nobiliary particle. My answer was no to all of them.

MOTHER: What did he look like?

I: He had no hair, and moustaches.

MOTHER: But he's no nobleman! You mean Noblet.

I: That's right, Noblet. . . . Give us this day our daily bread. . . .

#### IV

For us who were the children of actors, Sunday was a quite different thing from what it is for others. Did we find our parents ready to take us to the public gardens, the zoo, the circus? Not at all. In France, at least, our parents had two shows on Sunday — the *matinée* and the evening performance; and if we saw a play at all, we saw it usually from the wings.

Following her divorce, my mother went on the stage, under a name composed in part of her own maiden name and in part of my father's — Madame de Pontry. This is the way we spent our Sundays, my brother and I. Either on Saturday evening or on Sunday morning, we would go to our mother's from school. On Sunday morning we were dressed and taken toward noon to go 'kiss Madame Sarah.' For ten years we went to 'kiss Madame Sarah' as others go to Mass — piously. She was for us a being at once familiar and magical, and we would walk into her drawing-room with a bouquet of roses or violets in our hands. We knew, of course, that she was not a queen; but we understood that she was a sovereign.

From Madame Sarah's we would go off to lunch at Father's. Directly after lunch we would be taken to see our mother play — from the wings — in

whatever theatre she was performing. I know that she played in a number of theatres, but I actually remember only seeing her play in *Michael Strogoff*, at the *Châtelet*. I saw that play so often that it seems to me she must have played it constantly for more than ten years. And as a matter of fact, I am not sure she did n't play it ten years. It was revived year after year, every Christmas. This being so, I ought to be able to tell the story of *Michael Strogoff* in every detail; but I cannot, for I never understood exactly what took place. The reason was this: Marie Laurent, who was a great and beautiful actress, always played Marfa Strogoff, while my mother played Sangar, the wicked woman who was the infamous adviser of Emir Feophard. Now and then Marie Laurent, who was already eighty years old, would step out and be 'doubled' by my mother. Naturally, someone else played my mother's part, and this was quite enough to make the whole play incomprehensible to me.

We dined Sundays at my paternal grandmother's, and spent the evening in the wings of the Renaissance, where my father was playing. The first thing we did on reaching that theatre was to go 'kiss Madame Sarah.' Madame Sarah played a great part in our lives. After our father and our mother, she was certainly, in our eyes, the most important person in the world. We always went to her house first on our round of calls on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Easter Sunday.

The Christmas tree at Madame Sarah's was marvelous. It rose up very high in the middle of her studio, lighted by a thousand candles and hung with fifty gifts for the children — for on that day there were about fifty children round the tree. Each toy was numbered, and when the time came to distribute them Madame Sarah would stand with a large velvet bag out of

which each child drew a number, by chance. But somehow chance always saw that the handsomest toy fell to the little daughter of her son. Dressed like a princess in a fairy tale, adored and caressed, Simone Bernhardt was to the rest of us a very rare creature not altogether like ourselves, and it seemed to us natural that she should draw a much finer gift than ours. We even had the feeling that there were fifty of us there only in order that fifty children should attend her good fortune and bear witness that she was the happiest of all children in the world.

I loved Madame Sarah so much as a child, I felt for her such veneration and respect and tenderness, that any criticism of her has always been extremely disagreeable to me. I have no particular objection to anyone's writing in jest of her life, as Reynaldo Hahn did recently. I am the first to laugh when, as Jules Renard did in his *Diaries*, someone describes accurately and amusingly her house, her meals, her astounding way of welcoming people, her whims, oddities, injustices, and the extraordinary lies she would tell. And I quite like it when I hear stories like those my father used to tell with so much wit and delicacy, of Madame Sarah in the theatre, stories proving the eccentricity of her character and the constancy of her genius. But when I hear anyone attempting to compare her with other actresses, criticizing or condemning her, it is not merely odious to me, it is something I simply cannot bear.

Jules Renard wrote that 'those who do not love Victor Hugo are a bore to read, even when they are not writing about him.' I like that remark, and I feel that way about certain young actors who enjoy wondering idiotically 'what would happen' if Sarah Bernhardt came back. They think Sarah Bernhardt was an actress of *her* time! How stupid of them! Cannot they see

that if she came back she would be of *their* time?

There is in Art a category of superior joy so deep and so lofty that one is forever indebted to the artist who creates it.

## V

On his return from Petersburg, Lucien Guitry had gone to play at the Odéon. There he did several of his old plays — *Kean*, *Macbeth*, *Sapho* — and played opposite Réjane in *Amoureuse*. After they had done *Lysistrata*, he was unable to get on with Porel, the director of the Odéon, and Sarah Bernhardt welcomed him with open arms into her theatre. For thirty years Sarah Bernhardt had known to whom to speak: she had finally found someone who could answer her.

Rehearsals were called daily at one-fifteen for one-thirty. At any rate, that was the hour to be read on the call board, though only the supernumeraries were punctual. The cast would arrive in their good time, one after the other, my father strolling in at two-thirty or later. For *L'Aiglon* Edmond Rostand would turn up at three o'clock, and at about ten minutes to four Madame Sarah Bernhardt would make her entrance. Everybody would get up; the men would take off their hats and move forward to kiss her hand. As there were not less than sixty people on the stage, the kissing of her hand took a good half hour. Then Madame Sarah Bernhardt would withdraw to her dressing room and change — for she rehearsed *L'Aiglon* in the costume of Lorenzaccio, this male costume helping to establish the mood. As soon as she had changed, the rehearsal would begin. However, at five o'clock it was interrupted by 'Madame Sarah's tea.' The entire cast would watch with patience, with affection, with respect, while she took her tea. Everything the woman did was extraordinary; but to

those about her it was perfectly natural that she should do extraordinary things.

You see why *L'Aiglon* was rehearsed for five or six months.

For a number of weeks, in the Wagram scene, when my father — Flambeau — spoke the line,

*'Le ciel blanchit vers l'Est!'*<sup>2</sup>

Madame Sarah would answer,

*'J'empoigne la crinière!'*<sup>3</sup> *Allea jacta est!*

One day she asked what was meant by the words, '*J'empoigne la crinière.*' She thought they might be an allusion to the tail of a comet. To show that she was in the know, she asked Rostand the question.

'Not at all, madame. It means what it says. You are standing beside your horse and you grab the mane in order to mount astride.'

'What do you mean, my horse! Have I a horse?'

'Naturally, madame. You are leaving for France. You can't go on foot.'

Thereupon she called out to the stage manager that he was to bring on a horse the next day. Next day the horse was led in. It was a great devil of a bay, and leading it in by the bridle was one of those little stableboys all of whom look alike and whom one can't mistake even when they are not leading in a horse by the bridle. You can tell them easily by their parenthetical legs that always indicate where the horse fits; but the best way to tell them is by their eyes. People who look after horses always have something angelic in their glance.

Madame Sarah Bernhardt looked from a distance at the horse as she might have looked at an enemy. Then she went bravely toward him. I mean by this that she was scared blue and was trying vainly to hide the fact.

<sup>2</sup> 'The sky whitens in the East!'

<sup>3</sup> 'I grip the mane!' — EDITOR

When she was within three feet of 'the noblest conquest of man' the latter, doubtless by way of expressing his deference, struck the ground noisily with his hoof. Madame Sarah leapt back and cried out, 'Take that horse away this instant! He is vicious and horribly wicked! I don't want ever to see him again! Ever, ever, ever!'

Then she added, 'And try to find me another. I don't care what color he is, or what age, but he will have to be the mildest horse there is in the world.'

Two days later the lad came back with another horse. He was fat; he was gray; he was enormous; and his head was bound round in an old pair of woolen drawers. You will see why. The lad took off the drawers, disclosing a face, if I may say so, whose extreme mildness bordered on stupidity. Madame Sarah got up and took two cautious steps in the direction of the horse.

'Is this one gentle?'

'Oh, madame, just give him your hand. You'll see.'

'My hand! Not on your life! Leave me alone . . . and see that you have a good grip of him.'

She looked the horse straight in the face and went, 'Boo!'

The horse might have been a little surprised, but he did n't show it.

Madame Sarah said, 'We'll try another experiment. Bring me the thunder.'

The sheet iron that serves for thunder in the theatre was brought forward. She ordered two men to shake it as violently as possible. The noise was deafening, but the horse never stirred. Then, happy, her fears dissipated, Madame Sarah had an idea. Holding out her right hand to Rostand and her left hand to my father, she said, 'Let us take hands.' Like children about to dance, we all took hands. She drew us back step by step as far upstage as we could go, and there she said in a low voice, in order not to be overheard by

the horse, 'We'll all rush on him together and shout, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" . . . Ready? One, two, three!'

Dragged by her, we rushed upon the poor horse, screaming at the top of our voices, '*Vive l'Empereur!*'

Something happened then which is rather difficult to tell. Help me. Guess. Ask yourself what an animal would do that was afraid and had no command of words. You agree that he would make a noise? You've guessed it. He did. He made a noise. A noise that was like a tardy and resonant echo of the recent thunder. I don't believe it could be called the vulgar expression of a republican opinion of what we had shouted: nevertheless, Madame Sarah Bernhardt was deeply wounded. She said, 'We'll keep him, because he is not wicked. But he's a pig just the same.'

Then, turning to Rostand, she said to him as if he were nine years old and she fifteen, 'There! You have your horse. Are you happy now?'

And he said timidly, 'Yes, but . . . You see, madame . . . We'll want two.'

'Two what?'

'Two horses.'

'And why two horses?'

'We'll need one for Guitry. Flambeau leaves with you.'

She thought he was going rather far,

but said quickly enough, 'Very well, very well.'

Having made up her mind to refuse Rostand nothing, she turned to the stableboy and said, 'We shall keep this horse. Please bring this same one back to-morrow, and bring another. But he must be just as gentle as this one.'

Said the stableboy, 'Then I'll bring two others.'

'No, not two others. This one, and another one.'

'Can't be done. I'll have to bring two others.'

'But why? Why? Tell me why?'

She was becoming irritated and was jabbing him with 'whys' like a boxer's gloves as he stood rolling the drawers about the horse's head.

Finally he explained. 'Because, madame, I'm going to tell you. This horse is n't afraid of anything else in the world, but he's afraid of other horses. That's why I have to put these drawers over his head, because he's afraid of other horses.'

Thereupon Madame Sarah Bernhardt made up her mind that there would be no horses in the Wagram scene. And every evening, for seven or eight hundred triumphant performances of the play, Madame Sarah Bernhardt raised her arms to heaven and cried, —

*'J'empoigne la crinière! Alea jacta est!'*

(To be continued)



# IN ORDER OF THEIR EMINENCE

## *An Appraisal of American Universities*

BY EDWIN R. EMBREE

LAST winter in answering a politician's fantastic claims for the state university of his bailiwick, I hazarded a list of the dozen greatest universities in America. A storm at once broke about my temerarious head. Not only did the politician shriek curses and threats, but complaints and questions rained in from university presidents and professors all over the country. Even institutions which I had rated high protested that they should be higher, and universities omitted from the list wailed, and a few of them looked eagerly toward the libel courts. Only Harvard, which I placed first, was satisfied. Later followed a swarm of pupils and their mothers, asking my advice as to the college they should choose. Even instructors, ambitious for places in the sun, began to solicit my advice as to the transfer of their academic allegiances and my help in getting them positions on the faculties of my favored institutions.

Fortunately the rating of scholarly eminence among universities is not so much a matter of mere personal opinion as people generally assume. Authoritative appraisals are available of the attainments of individual professors and the relative standing of the several departments of science and learning at the various universities and research institutes. It is easily possible, although somewhat unusual, to add together the various elements of dis-

tinction and thus to assess the scholarly status of American universities.

Before appraising the greatest centres of learning, let us be perfectly clear about what we are discussing. We are considering university scholarship, not college life. A university, according to Webster, is 'an institution organized for teaching and study in the higher branches of learning.' In Europe, where the concept originated, the university grew up as an aggregation of scholars who came together for the purpose of pursuing advanced studies under great masters and of collaborating with those masters in enlarging the borders of knowledge in their chosen fields. Colleges in these European universities were merely subgroups associated for convenience either of residence or of discipline. The term 'university' in most countries has been restricted to the highest forms of academic activity. In America it has been used to designate almost anything from an institution of higher learning to an association of quack doctors or a glorified high school. But by increasing agreement, even in America, 'college' is now used to designate undergraduate residence or the offerings of some special department; 'university' is reserved for institutions of higher learning.

Whatever the vagaries of current usage, in the present discussion I employ 'university' to designate in-

stitutions which emphasize the higher reaches of scholarship. Great universities I regard as those which have on their faculties the great masters of the several branches of learning, masters who are not only imparting known truth to advanced students, but also working with their student colleagues in enlarging the borders of knowledge. Such high scholarship is a very different thing from either schoolmastering or the general pleasures of college life.

Creative scholarship is not necessarily better than teaching or better even than successful football teams. It is simply different. Judgments about it, therefore, must be made on different grounds from those applicable to other aspects of school and college. If I were rating the athletic standing of institutions, I should not confuse the discussion by mentioning the intellectual prowess of physically feeble professors. Similarly, when we are considering the scholarly eminence of universities, questions of football triumph or the country-club aspects of undergraduate life are not relevant.

While the search for wisdom is not the only goal of life, it is the essential feature of a university. Capitalistic business succeeds by profits, hospitals exist for curing the sick, the police are supported to maintain law and order. If these institutions fall short in these essential functions, their failure is recognized, whatever other qualities of an agreeable sort they may be able to show. Just as definitely, a university exists for the education of students in the highest reaches of scholarship and for advancing knowledge. In so far as a university falls short in this, it is a failure, no matter how handsome its campus or expensive its buildings, no matter how successful its football team or how fashionable its student body. To the degree that universities cultivate the best and most advanced intellects and to the extent that they

constantly add to the store of human wisdom, to that extent they are great.

# I

How does one go about appraising the scholarly eminence of universities? In the first place, one may take the lists of the most distinguished scientists as published in *American Men of Science* and in somewhat similar records for the other branches of learning and tabulate the centres of concentration of these most eminent scholars. Second, since creative scholarship finds expression ultimately in publication, it is possible through the scientific journals to appraise the scholarly output of the several university faculties. The third and probably the soundest method is to rely on appraisals of the relative eminence of the several departments of universities made by competent scholars in each field. The scholars themselves are best able to judge distinction in their own subject and they are thoroughly acquainted with all the important workers in their own relatively small domains. Such appraisals have been made by juries of scholars in each of the various scientific and learned subjects. An initial rating of the eminence of given departments in American universities, intended for the guidance of prospective graduate students, was made a decade ago by committees assembled by Dr. R. M. Hughes, then president of Miami University. A new and more comprehensive study has recently been made by a Committee of the American Council on Education and the results published in the *Educational Record* of March 1934, and reprinted as a pamphlet of the American Council. In the earlier tabulation, the juries were asked to rate the several American universities in the relative order of their eminence in each subject. The second appraisal did not attempt a

numerical rating of the universities, but simply listed those which were judged to have adequate provisions in faculty and equipment for advanced graduate work in the given subject, and starred that smaller and highly select number which were judged to be especially distinguished in each field.

I have used this 1934 report of the American Council on Education as the basis of my rating of universities. That study records the judgments of fifty to one hundred competent scholars in each subject as to the standing of universities in thirty-five departments. If any university were judged distinguished in all thirty-five of the designated fields, it might be regarded as completely and universally distinguished. As a matter of fact, the university adjudged eminent in the greatest number of departments has only twenty-three stars to its credit out of a possible thirty-five.

In my own tabulations I have carried the study somewhat beyond the tables of the American Council report. I have, for example, combined a number of the subdivisions of the sciences into the general basic subjects, so that there would be fairly equal units for comparison. I have also asked individuals to rate for me the basic medical sciences, which are omitted from the American Council study. In all, I have compiled twenty-four major departments of learning, including the medical sciences, as contrasted with the thirty-five subdivisions of the American Council report. A list of these departments and of the universities starred for distinction in each appears in the table on page 655. I have supplemented this study by a tabulation of the centres of concentration of the most eminent scientists as compiled in the starred lists of *American Men of Science*. In addition, I have consulted individual scholars and national committees which were in a

position to judge the scholarly attainment of American universities.

It is surprising how consistently the several universities hold their relative places when any of these tests are applied, and it is amazing how uniform are the judgments of competent groups and individuals as to the standing of universities in given departments. For example, the American Council committee lists the universities most distinguished in anthropology as Harvard, Chicago, Columbia, California, Yale. I have asked anthropologists in various parts of the country to name the leading centres of this science; without hesitation every one has named these five universities, and no one has even mentioned any other. In certain other subjects the judgments are more difficult, but there is on the whole astonishing agreement among the scholars of any given discipline as to the university centres which are preëminent in that field. Remarkable also is the concentration of distinguished departments at a few universities. In the twenty-four basic subjects, 206 departments throughout the country are rated as of high excellence. The leading eleven universities account for 167 of these distinguished departments; only 39 are found scattered among all the other hundreds of universities and technical institutes of the United States.

There is nothing unusual or even very difficult in the rating of individual departments. That is currently done in all university thinking and planning. The thing that is out of the ordinary is to bring together these gradings of departments in an attempt to appraise the total scholarly eminence of the universities as a whole. While I have based my ratings on authoritative findings, most of which are matters of published record, I must in the end assume personal responsibility for the judgments.

With all these considerations and

reservations in mind, here is my rating of American universities in the order of their scholarly eminence: —

1. Harvard
2. Chicago
3. Columbia
4. California
5. Yale
6. Michigan
7. Cornell
8. Princeton
9. Johns Hopkins
10. Wisconsin
11. Minnesota

## II

Harvard is in a class by itself. This oldest of our institutions has maintained its priority for nearly three hun-

dred years, almost the entire span of our colonial and national history. In 1636 the general court of Massachusetts Colony voted £400 toward a 'schoale or colledge,' whose site outside Boston was two years later named Cambridge in memory of the English university where some seventy of the leading men of the Colony had been educated. An immigrant Puritan minister, dying in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in 1638 bequeathed to the little wilderness seminary half of his estate, £780 and 260 books. In astonished gratitude the institution was at once named for him; thus John Harvard purchased enduring fame at one of the greatest bargains known to history.

Ever since Charles W. Eliot in 1869

## TABLE OF DISTINGUISHED DEPARTMENTS

*Including All Universities Judged to Have More Than Five Departments of High Excellence*

|               | Anthropology | Astronomy | Bacteriology | Biochemistry (including animal and human nutrition) | Botany (including plant physiology, plant pathology, soil science) | Chemistry and Chemical Engineering | Classics | Economics | Education | Engineering | English | Geology | German | History | Mathematics | Pathology and the Clinical Sciences of Medicine | Philosophy | Physics | Physiology (including anatomy, pharmacology, embryology) | Political Science | Psychology | Romance Languages | Sociology | Zoology (including genetics and entomology) | Total |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------|-------|
| HARVARD       | *            | *         | *            | *                                                   | *                                                                  | *                                  | *        | *         | *         | *           | *       | *       | *      | *       | *           | *                                               | *          | *       | *                                                        | *                 | *          | *                 | *         | *                                           | 22    |
| CHICAGO       | *            | *         | *            |                                                     | *                                                                  | *                                  | *        | *         | *         |             | *       | *       | *      | *       | *           | *                                               |            | *       | *                                                        | *                 | *          | *                 | *         | *                                           | 21    |
| COLUMBIA      | *            |           |              |                                                     | *                                                                  | *                                  | *        | *         | *         |             | *       | *       | *      | *       | *           | *                                               | *          | *       | *                                                        | *                 | *          | *                 | *         | *                                           | 19    |
| CALIFORNIA    | *            | *         | *            |                                                     | *                                                                  | *                                  | *        | *         | *         |             | *       | *       |        | *       |             |                                                 | *          | *       | *                                                        | *                 | *          | *                 | *         | *                                           | 18    |
| YALE          | *            |           | *            | *                                                   |                                                                    | *                                  | *        | *         | *         |             | *       | *       | *      | *       |             | *                                               | *          | *       | *                                                        | *                 | *          | *                 | *         | *                                           | 18    |
| MICHIGAN      |              | *         | *            |                                                     | *                                                                  | *                                  | *        | *         | *         |             | *       |         |        | *       |             | *                                               | *          | *       |                                                          | *                 |            |                   |           | *                                           | 14    |
| CORNELL       |              |           | *            | *                                                   | *                                                                  | *                                  |          | *         |           | *           |         |         |        | *       |             | *                                               | *          | *       | *                                                        |                   | *          |                   |           | *                                           | 13    |
| PRINCETON     |              | *         |              |                                                     |                                                                    | *                                  | *        | *         |           |             | *       | *       |        |         | *           |                                                 | *          | *       |                                                          | *                 | *          | *                 |           | *                                           | 13    |
| JOHNS HOPKINS |              |           | *            | *                                                   |                                                                    | *                                  | *        |           |           |             | *       | *       | *      |         |             | *                                               | *          |         |                                                          |                   |            | *                 |           | *                                           | 11    |
| WISCONSIN     |              |           | *            | *                                                   | *                                                                  | *                                  |          | *         |           |             |         | *       | *      |         |             |                                                 | *          | *       |                                                          | *                 |            |                   | *         | *                                           | 11    |
| MINNESOTA     |              |           |              |                                                     |                                                                    | *                                  | *        | *         |           |             |         | *       |        |         |             |                                                 |            | *       |                                                          | *                 |            | *                 |           |                                             | 7     |

began the transformation of a traditional New England college into America's first university, Harvard has persistently held primacy among the nation's institutions of higher learning. It is the richest as well as the oldest, holding probably the largest endowment for education (\$128,000,000) of any organization in world history; it has on its faculty by far the greatest concentration of distinguished men of science — nearly 40 per cent more than any other university; it has the greatest number of stars in the American Council list of distinguished departments and also in my reclassification by basic departments. Of the twenty-four major branches of learning, Harvard is starred for distinction in all except sociology and the engineering sciences, which latter, in a very proper division of labor, it leaves to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Furthermore, Harvard's preëminence is widely — one might almost say, universally — recognized among the laity as well as among scholars throughout this country and Europe. To hold a degree from Harvard carries social as well as scholastic distinction; to be a member of its faculty is an honor universally coveted; its president is ex officio the leader of American science and letters.

Even more striking in any study of American scholarship is the eminence of the University of Chicago. Here we have not an old foundation maintaining its standing, but a very new institution planted on the intellectually barren plains of a frontier, forging forward in pure scholarship ahead of institutions which had generations of distinguished history and tradition behind them. Chicago stands at least second by all the tests of eminence that have been applied. By certain of them she equals and even exceeds Harvard.

For example, in the earlier Hughes rating of relative standing of departments, Chicago had 8 departments rated first among all American universities, 4 rated second in eminence, and 5 third; Harvard had 7 firsts, 6 seconds, and 3 thirds. Of the twenty-four basic fields, Chicago is rated distinguished in all except the engineering sciences, philosophy, and biochemistry.

The University of Chicago is a shining example of what can be attained by the combination of ideals, consistent policy, and financial resources. Mr. Rockefeller generously poured in the millions that made it possible to build in the capital of America's middle empire one of the world's greatest universities — the most brilliant of all the accomplishments of the Rockefeller fortune. A total of \$70,000,000 was given from Rockefeller sources, including the personal gifts and the later grants from the Rockefeller boards. The announcement, in the nineties, that salaries for top professors were to be \$7000 rocked the academic world as much as Ford's later offer to pay laborers five dollars a day shocked industry. The university's generous and courageous attitude toward professors' salaries ushered in a new era in academic life.

But it was not money alone that made the University of Chicago great. Even to-day her endowment is less than half that of Harvard and well below that of other Eastern universities which she outranks in scholarly eminence. Chicago's distinction is in the fact that from the first she set out with single purpose, not to create a fashionable college or an enormous conglomerate institution, but to build a university in the real meaning of the term: a collection of the finest scientists and scholars, working with a selected group of mature students for the advancement of knowledge. The



undergraduate college, although an exceedingly good one, has never been the major interest; nor has the University of Chicago maintained large schools for purely professional training.

William Rainey Harper was perhaps the most picturesque figure in the whole history of American universities. Born in an unheard-of little town in Ohio, educated at the then little-known Muskingum College, he migrated for graduate study and teaching in Semitic languages to Yale and to a Baptist theological seminary in Chicago. No one would look in that beginning for the dynamic figure of American scholarship. But his Baptist and Midwest connections commended him to John D. Rockefeller and his advisers. And once chosen for the leadership of the new university, which was founded only forty-three years ago, Harper proved a wise and courageous builder, a persistent leech in sucking out Rockefeller millions, a 'flashing comet in the western sky of the universe of learning.'

Columbia University, which has grown from the early foundations of King's College in 1754 and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1767, is a strange conglomerate of contradictions. It sprawls on the northern hill of America's largest metropolis. Its size is in the most blatant American tradition: an enrollment of over 30,000 students annually, of whom 10,000 are in the huge summer sessions and over 5000 in extension classes. It is on the one hand a university offering a series of well-knit courses of enriching study, and on the other a giant day school purveying knowledge in well-docketed packages to a huge population of eager and ambitious young people — aged sixteen to sixty. Its Teachers College, a semi-autonomous unit, grinds out courses and degrees to thousands of persons who return to every city and countryside of America with none too

well digested 'credits in education,' on the basis of which they in turn pour instruction upon the defenseless heads of hundreds of thousands of pupils and pupil-teachers. Last year Teachers College gave the M. A. degree — that morsel delectable to all American teachers — to 1867 persons, all too many of them after merely a series of courses in educational busywork.

With all its size and in spite of its amorphous structure and uneven standards, Columbia has great intellectual wealth for those who care to search it out. It has excellent professional schools, especially in medicine and law. Even Teachers College, for all its degree-mongering, has some exceptionally fine scholars and some yeasty thinkers. The splendid graduate faculty is often embarrassed by the purple reputation of other departments, but its truly great scientists and scholars are not deflected from their high standards or their creative work. By any tests of scholarly eminence Columbia easily stands third among American universities. It has nineteen departments starred for distinction and numbers on its faculties fifty-four of America's most distinguished scientists.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A tabulation of the scientists starred for distinction in the 1932 edition of *American Men of Science*, excluding those who are retired or emeritus, shows that they are concentrated at the following universities, including in the list only institutions having twenty-five or more: Harvard 78, Chicago 57, Columbia 54, Yale 50, California 46, Johns Hopkins 39, Cornell 35, Princeton 31, Wisconsin 30, Michigan 29, Minnesota 26, Pennsylvania 26, Stanford 25.

Another measure of scientific standing is a study of the universities at which the leading scientists received preparation for their careers. The scientists starred for distinction in the 1927 and 1932 editions of *American Men of Science* took their advanced study, culminating in the Ph.D. or Sc.D., at the following universities, listing only those with twenty-five or more: Harvard 101, Chicago 96, Columbia 65, Johns Hopkins 50, Yale 37, Cornell 32, Princeton 29, California 25. — AUTHOR

## III

The University of California is the leader of four state schools which find places in the list of preëminent centres of American learning. Only a few decades ago it was generally assumed that private endowments were the only guarantee of high scholarship and pure science. It was supposed that taxpayers and their legislators, while possibly willing to support extensively the passing on of knowledge to the younger generations, would never respect high standards or support research. Happily that has proved to be far from true. State universities are now in the very front rank of scholarship in America, as they have been for generations in Germany and France and most other countries except England.

In some ways state institutions are less secure than private foundations. Legislative appropriations which must be made afresh at each biennial session are less dependable than income on fixed endowment — at least they were supposed to be until the depression revealed the insecurity of any fiscal expectations. In the early days, politics tended to infect the administration of public universities. Even today an occasional outburst of political meddling occurs, as for example the scandal of a few years ago in Mississippi and the *opéra bouffe* antics last autumn in Louisiana. But the older state universities have won a real integrity, and the swift punishment by public opinion that recently struck the astonished heads of interfering politicians has pretty well taught self-seeking officials that they had better leave the educational institutions alone and concentrate upon easier and more accustomed spoils. While there has been some legislative interference with teaching, as in the notorious monkey laws of Tennessee, and while there are

constant threats by individual legionnaires and legislators against advanced opinions in economics and the social sciences, there is in actual fact probably no more interference with the intellectual freedom of state universities than comes from reactionary donors and boards of trustees of private endowments.

The University of California — opened in 1869, only twenty years after the gold rush — has outstripped even Columbia in the doubtful distinction of bigness. Some 24,000 students are annually in residence there and about 30,000 more attend extension classes throughout the state. Huge professional schools spread over from the University's seat in Berkeley into the city of San Francisco. And the jealousy of the southern section of the state has forced the development of a large subdivision in Los Angeles which already numbers nearly 7000 students, the overwhelming majority of whom are women studying to become teachers. In spite of its size and the factory aspects of certain of its divisions, the University of California in its higher departments has a galaxy of the most distinguished scholars and scientists in America, who have already set fine traditions in creative scholarship. Eighteen of the graduate departments of this university at the far shores of the Pacific are rated as among the scientific élite of America.

Yale for years has had the best undergraduate college in the United States. This is the purely personal opinion of a Yale graduate, since too many factors enter into college life to make objective appraisals possible. At any rate the college has always been Yale's pride and joy. Recently even greater renown has come from the eminent graduate and professional schools, and from the distinctive contributions to scholarly publication of the Yale University Press. In material

wealth Yale is exceeded only by Harvard. While a shocking proportion of her recent money — over \$50,000,000 during the past decade — has gone into the most extravagant building programme ever known in academic history, this is not entirely the University's fault. Those particular funds were available only for buildings, and during the same decade Yale has added even more — some \$52,000,000 — to her endowment, which now amounts to the impressive total of \$92,000,000.

Yale more than once has just missed the chance for primacy in American education. The most conspicuous instance was in the middle of the last century, when all the older colleges were in a rut and when an educational renaissance was simply waiting for a leader. The only signs of liberal education on the American horizon at that time were the newer universities of the West. The New England colleges of the fifties and sixties were still small seminaries where two to three hundred young gentlemen were presided over by clergymen and taught routine subjects by a dozen schoolmasters. There was a stalemate between the old classical teaching and the new sciences. It was not merely a question of alternative subjects. The old curriculum was almost entirely rote drill in grammatical construction and mechanical translation plus some equally routine cross-word-puzzle work in mathematics, while the sciences were an intellectual adventure, an opportunity for the student to join actively with his professors in exploring new fields.

At both Yale and Harvard strong forces of revolt were in evidence. Able exponents of the new sciences were at each place and active discussions of educational policy were disturbing the centuries of complacency of faculty and trustees. Momentous decisions were being forced upon these historic colonial colleges. Harvard, amid an-

guish and debate, turned from its clerical and formalistic traditions and elected as president in 1869 a young professor of chemistry, Charles W. Eliot, who immediately began the building of America's greatest university. At this same time Yale had carried even further than Harvard the new ideas in learning and had an even more brilliant group of scientists: Gibbs, Brewer, Brush, Marsh, Sumner, Dana, Gilman. Yale might have taken an educational step ahead of Harvard; she might have selected as the leader of a new programme the young geologist, Daniel C. Gilman, who in almost every way had the same relation to Yale and educational reform that Eliot had to Harvard. But Yale could not bring herself to accept her own greatness and potentialities. Instead, in 1863, the Sheffield Scientific School was founded as a separate corporation to foster the sciences which Yale College continued to snub, and in 1871 Reverend Noah Porter was made president to continue the clerical and school-masterish traditions.

Yale is sometimes referred to as the Mother of Colleges. Many of her graduates and professors have gone elsewhere to lead notable educational movements: Gilman to inaugurate the new University of California and to direct the brilliant course of Johns Hopkins, Andrew D. White to introduce fresh methods at Cornell, Harper to launch the University of Chicago, William H. Welch to start a new kind of medical education at Johns Hopkins, Charles H. Judd to create a great School of Education at Chicago, Guy Stanton Ford to build up one of the most vigorous of modern graduate schools at Minnesota, Robert M. Hutchins to introduce further educational liberalism at Chicago. Of course interchange of professors and leaders goes on continually among universities and is one of the means of educa-

tional progress. If Yale has suffered conspicuously, her loss is the nation's gain.

#### IV

The next six universities fall clearly into the second bracket, but the relative rating among them is difficult. One can arrange this second set in any order among themselves and have good reasons for it, except that Minnesota, in spite of recent rapid gains, is still probably not above eleventh in scholarly eminence. I have set them down in a certain rank, which seems to me justified, but even the criteria that I have followed indicate first one order and then another.

Michigan is the oldest of the great group of Western state universities, dating in its direct ancestry to the 'Catholepistemiad of Michigania' of 1817 and in its present organization to one of the first acts of the legislature of the newly created State of Michigan in 1837. It has an honored history and an illustrious present. Cornell, which I place next, is especially strong in the sciences which underlie medicine and agriculture, and is one of the few general universities which have developed the engineering sciences to a high point. Michigan and Cornell were among the first to develop the new sciences. Even in the sixties both of them were moving toward the modern concept of a university.

Princeton has the most brilliant recent history of all the universities of this second group. Up to the year 1902, when Woodrow Wilson became its president, no one would have thought of naming Princeton in any list of institutions selected for scientific research or the advancement of knowledge. At that time it was familiarly referred to as 'America's most delightful country club.' A fashionable assembly of young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, many of

them from the leading families of the Old South, were wont to spend four agreeable years in this New Jersey village, attending classes under benign and not too vigorous teachers, playing football with enthusiasm and success, and singing on balmy spring and autumn evenings on the steps of Old Nassau. Meanwhile the Princeton Theological Seminary, Presbyterian and fundamentalist, kept up the traditions of gentility untroubled by anything so bourgeois as intellectual struggle.

President Wilson declared, 'The side shows have grown more important than the main tent,' and set out ruthlessly to change it all. He attacked the student clubs, citadels of complacent snobbishness. He urged a tutorial system to stir the intellectual fire of individual students. He opposed the project of Dean West to remove the Graduate School to a separate and secluded plot, arguing that even undergraduates should be scholars, and that research and high intellectual endeavor should not be confined to cloisters but should inspire and infect the whole life of an institution. It is hard, thirty years later, to recapture the spirit of that struggle; the driving enthusiasm of the crusading president; the bitter anger of the guardians of Princeton's pleasant traditions. Finally Dean West won his particular fight by getting a donation which sealed the fate of the new Graduate School. Wilson resigned, and it looked as though any hope for keen scholarship at Princeton were lost. But the spirit of the crusade survived its leader. Fortunately the technical victory of Dean West secured not only a home but an endowment for graduate studies, and as a result scholarship was enthroned at Princeton as it had never been before.

Other events have added to the scientific eminence of the Princeton community. For twenty years the de-

partment of animal pathology of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research has been near by. More recently Abraham Flexner has also placed his Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. This new graduate school will share in and add to the scientific wealth of the university. Dr. Flexner, a lifelong protagonist of the university ideal, is building his new organization exclusively on pure science in its higher reaches. Among his first appointments was Albert Einstein and he has added four others of the world's greatest mathematicians to his small research group. Thus the mathematics personnel in this New Jersey community is already the most distinguished in the world. With Flexner's recondite faculty and the new devotion to scholarship of Princeton itself, ably financed by wealthy alumni and friends, this university in a single generation has changed from America's leading country club to one of the nation's centres of highest scholarship.

Johns Hopkins is another exciting member of our galaxy of institutions of higher learning. It opened its doors in 1876 as the first real university in America — that is, the first institution to put its emphasis on the higher branches of knowledge. Established by what at that time was a fabulous bequest (seven million dollars) from a Baltimore merchant, — quizzically reputed to have been so ignorant that he did n't even know how to spell his own first name, — the new university at once began to set fresh standards in American scholarship. The direction of the new school was put into the hands of a great scholar, Daniel C. Gilman, whose one purpose was to assemble a faculty of brilliant scientists and a student body of serious-minded scholars. The medical school, opened a decade and a half later under such leaders as William H. Welch and William Osler, transformed what had

hitherto been regarded as routine professional training into an organization devoted largely to advancing the science of medicine.

The intellectual ferment stirred up by this new kind of university spread widely. The influence of the Baltimore institution was for many years paramount in American scholarship. It was a potent factor in the development of research and graduate instruction at Harvard, and it started a movement which twenty years later another new school, the University of Chicago, was able to carry much further. By all reasonable expectations Johns Hopkins should have developed into America's leading institution of learning. But after the first dazzling bequest, and in spite of gifts totaling some twenty million dollars from the Rockefeller boards for the medical departments, the university has had great difficulty in financing itself. Furthermore, the urge to develop conventional departments became irresistible. College life on the handsome new campus at Homewood, the training of teachers, and extension courses have diverted a part of the attention which at first went solely to high scholarship. Johns Hopkins has failed to maintain the leadership that was expected of it fifty years ago. However, even to-day there are those who insist that it is still the finest of American universities, that within its resources — its annual budgets of approximately two and a half million dollars are less than one quarter those of Harvard, Columbia, and California — it devotes itself with more nearly single purpose to scholarship than any other institution on this continent.

The list closes with two of the most interesting of the Midwestern state universities — institutions which have combined the advancement of learning in its very highest branches with general educational service to the whole



population of their states. Wisconsin has the older history of scholarship and of state-wide service, but during recent years Minnesota has been climbing rapidly while Wisconsin has lost some of the distinction she held during the great days of Van Hise. Under intelligent leadership of president and deans, infused equally with imagination and common sense, with political sagacity and downright courage, Minnesota offers to-day the finest example of what a university may mean in influence upon a whole great state.

I have not named the twelfth institution. This is not only to allow myself an alley of escape from the fierce claims of a multitude of universities to a place in America's first dozen, but because no other institution, by any objective tests that I have applied, approaches the eminence of the eleven I have listed. If one were to attempt to fill this place he would have to weigh the claims of a number of universities which have distinction in certain branches but which lack the widespread eminence of the leaders. The most active contestants for twelfth place are Stanford University in California, the Universities of Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Iowa, and Ohio State University. Washington University, in Saint Louis, and the University of Rochester are strong in the medical sciences but not equally so in other subjects. The two great technical schools — Massachusetts Institute of Technology and California Institute of Technology — are preëminent in engineering and mathematics and the physical sciences which underlie this profession, but they lack the universality of scholarship implied in the term 'university.'

# V

It would be agreeable to turn for a moment from this consideration of pure scholarship to contemplate schools

which are most interesting for other reasons. So far as undergraduates are concerned, the advancement of the borders of truth is not of such immediate concern as a stimulating environment in which to acquire a general grasp of existing knowledge and to begin a wholesome growth toward the ideal of a scholar and a gentleman.

If I were picking a small college, I should place Swarthmore at the head of the list. Standing just outside the culturally rich city of Philadelphia, with a tolerant and intelligent Quaker background, this college is one of the few smaller institutions which have been able to appoint professors of a distinction approaching those of the great universities, yet has never forgotten the fact that stimulating teaching is the first duty of a college. Under the able direction of President Aydelotte it has eschewed the temptations of bigness or any kind of professional training and has concentrated its very considerable resources on first-rate general education.

America has plenty of good small colleges. Among them Amherst and Williams in Massachusetts, Carleton in Minnesota, and the Claremont group of colleges in Southern California happen to be my favorites. Dartmouth, in the New Hampshire hills, is a most excellent place. Founded about 1750 by a Yale graduate first as a charity school for Indians, Dartmouth has educated many of America's famous men and has held an honorable place for nearly two centuries among the group of New England colleges which were the beginnings of American education. In spite of its recent growth in numbers and wealth, it takes pride in keeping itself a college rather than a university, cherishing the historic plea of Daniel Webster before the United States Supreme Court which established the inviolable rights of the college. There has grown up recently

an active group of 'progressive colleges,' among the most notable of which are Antioch in Ohio and Bennington (for women only) in Vermont.

The most exciting American institution for the general undergraduate student is the University of Hawaii. Situated on the slopes of the picturesque volcanic hills of Honolulu, at the crossroads of the Pacific, this youngest of our state universities offers sound instruction in the conventional subjects and a stirring education in world citizenship obtainable nowhere else. Among its educational influences is the presence of considerable numbers of able and attractive Japanese and Chinese students who guarantee an intellectual competition stimulating and often distressing even to the best of Nordic brains. A smaller number of Polynesians and a few students from Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and other Pacific countries combine to make this the most cosmopolitan of American colleges. The presence on the regular faculty of a Japanese and a Chinese professor and visiting lecturers from many countries of Europe and Asia, together with scholarly attention to Eastern arts and civilizations as well as to those of the West, offer a broadening of view highly desirable to the average American youth. The atmosphere is stimulating also because of the important scientific research of the biological experiment stations of the large sugar and pineapple interests of the Islands, the investigations in ethnology and natural history of the Bishop Museum, and the special studies of Pacific problems, both social and physical, supported by special grants from foundations.

A similarly stimulating environment is the University of New Mexico, where the student may rub shoulders with Indian, Spanish, and Anglo-Saxon cultures in a setting refreshing both as to human and as to natural scene.

For their undergraduate course I strongly advise every boy and girl who can possibly do it to go to a college outside the home region. This is done by large numbers from the West and South, who, as a matter of course, go East to college. But one reason why New England and the North Atlantic seaboard are so much more provincial than other sections of the country is that Eastern students have not even considered going elsewhere for their education. To-day excellent colleges may be found all the way from Boston to Hawaii, and any student who does not roam a thousand miles or more during his undergraduate years misses the very considerable educational stimulus of fresh environment.

## VI

In contemplating American scholarship, the sectional distribution of the great centres is significant. A surprise is the wealth of the Midwest in institutions of the first rank. Of course the Eastern seaboard still holds priority. Of the eleven universities named in my list, five are on the Atlantic coast and one other, Cornell, while still regarded by New Englanders as hopelessly Western, is really a part of the Atlantic coastal group. The preponderance of America's scholars is still in the East, where the nation began. Nevertheless, one who has not thought much about it is amazed to find that four of America's eleven greatest centres of learning, and in addition three of the five most active claimants to twelfth place, are in that section which is so very new and which is supposed to have little regard for anything above the material progress represented by harvesting machines, canned meat, the wheat pit, and mail-order catalogues.

The scholastic eminence of the Midwest is due largely to a single influence:

the fact that the University of Chicago was enabled to build itself into an institution of such high distinction that it set standards and established traditions which the surrounding universities were almost forced to follow. The Rockefeller millions and the Harper leadership not only created a great university; they transformed the intellectual standards of a whole region.

An even more striking item is that no university in the whole South is of a scholarly eminence justifying a place on this list or even on much longer catalogues of America's leading universities. The Atlantic seaboard, the Midwest, and the Pacific slope are all contributing toward the highest reaches of the intellectual life. The South alone is outside the main currents of science and scholarship.

The Association of American Universities has admitted to its membership only three Southern institutions: the Universities of North Carolina, Virginia, and Texas. In the twenty-four fundamental branches of learning which I have used as the basis of my tabulation, there are a total of 206 university departments throughout the country rated as distinguished. Of these, only one is found in a Southern university — the Institute for Research in Social Science under the brilliant direction of Dr. Howard Odum at the University of North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> One place of eminence out of two hundred for a region which represents nearly a third of the area and more than a quarter of the population of the entire nation!

I comment on this shortage in the South, not in captious criticism, but in the earnest hope that something will be

done about it. The South is still producing about as many of the nation's leaders as any other region. But the lack of business opportunity has driven most of the industrially ambitious to careers in the North, and the lack of intellectual opportunity has driven the best brains to universities in the East and West for their advanced study and for their academic careers. Even one university of first rank would rally the intellectual forces of the region, would provide a centre at which Southern scholars could make their careers and to which a fair share of the best minds of other sections could be drawn. And it might be expected to have immediate influence on neighboring institutions, just as Chicago has raised the scholarly tone of the whole group of Midwestern universities.

Happily there are centres which might readily be built into great universities. In addition to the three which are now members of the Association of American Universities, promising Southern institutions are Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tulane in New Orleans, Duke in central North Carolina, and Emory in Atlanta.

It is probable that money from outside the South will be required to build a great university. Rockefeller, Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and others have already helped to create the present centres. It is natural and proper that wealth from any part of America should interest itself in a Southern university, for progress by the nation as a whole is dependent upon well-rounded growth of each of the sections. Contributions to a notable centre of scholarship for the South may easily be repaid in a single generation by scientific discoveries made at that institution and by the raising of the intellectual level of a whole section of the American commonwealth. A great university in the South is the insistent need in American scholarship to-day.

<sup>2</sup> In the American Council list of thirty-five departments and subdepartments, the University of Texas is also starred for eminence in the specialty of genetics. Scholarly assets begin to appear in at least two Negro universities: Fisk and Atlanta. The division of social science under Charles S. Johnson at Fisk is among the most productive of Southern institutes. — AUTHOR

# LISTENERS ENGLISH AND AMERICAN

BY VERA BRITTAIN

## I

WHEN I read the article 'Hands across the Sea' in the April issue of this magazine, I could not help wondering how many English authors, actors, preachers, and teachers were dreaming at that moment of making easy money by exploiting the great American public in precisely the manner described by 'A Yankee.' In this essay, I propose to give him the retort courteous by explaining to my would-be fellow lecturers who have not yet crossed the Atlantic that, though there is certainly money to be made by lecturing in the United States, no English man or woman need expect to make it both easily and legitimately.

My own tour last autumn was a comparatively modest affair. I did not attempt to emulate the two hundred orchidaceous lectures once delivered in a single season by Oscar Wilde, nor to spread such limited eloquence as I possess from coast to coast, nor to shake hands with such national celebrities as President Roosevelt, Charlie Chaplin, Upton Sinclair, or Aimee Semple McPherson. Nevertheless, even the unspectacular performance of forty-five lectures and broadcasts in nine weeks through eighteen states, and the continuous transport of myself and my baggage across a mere twenty thousand miles of unfamiliar territory, have convinced me that lecturing in England is a simple, amiable, and amateurish proposition, which need deceive no

English speaker into imagining that success upon the platforms of his own country in itself qualifies him to appear before the exacting, critical, and experienced audiences of the United States.

The contrast between England and America, as lecture fields, lies chiefly in the psychology of these listeners, which accounts for the widely different status of lecturing in the two countries. It also presents an insufficiently considered problem to English lecturers, who can now only hope to recapture the traditional welcome which they are in danger of losing by dispossessing themselves as they leave Southampton of the curious illusion that American audiences will gather together in large numbers for the doubtful privilege of hearing an Oxford accent.

## II

In England, lecturing is a semiprofessional job, incidental to other jobs, for which the lecturer is lucky if he or she receives a fee which even partially compensates for the time and trouble involved. Apart from a limited group of audiences, such as women's luncheon clubs and the wealthier nonconformist chapels, which are easily covered by one or two lecture agencies, the line between professional and amateur speaking is almost indecipherable. As soon as anyone becomes known as a lec-

turer, constant pressure is put upon him by political and social organizations to make him feel a moral obligation to speak for them, usually for his expenses only, but sometimes without the offer even of these.

When my English agent arranges commercial lectures for me in provincial towns, voluntary societies from the same cities besiege me with invitations to extend my visit in order to address them gratis. This is not because I am in any way a remarkable speaker, but because the prospect of getting something at the expense of another organization is irresistible to minority groups with limited resources. The free lectures demanded include talks to schools, colleges, religious brotherhoods, welfare centres, and political bodies.

Recently, at a large seaport town, I found myself involved in the arrangements for a midnight supper which was to follow an exacting lecture to a big chapel audience. No mention of a speech was made in the original invitation, which came from a group unconnected with the organizers of the lecture, but at the last moment, with an early train to catch in the morning and a further series of engagements to follow, I was abruptly notified that a half-hour speech was expected of me after two other speeches at the close of the meal. If the tired worm turns — as this worm did on that occasion — he risks unpopularity, the hostility of the local press, and the loss of subsequent professional engagements. Nowhere in America did I encounter the same naïve impression that an overworked lecturer is highly honored by invitations to address obscure groups for nothing.

Curiously enough, the sponsoring organizations — unlike their American counterparts, whose commercial exclusiveness is usually a welcome protection — seldom raise any objection to this

method of exploiting both themselves and their speakers. At the end of the year the English lecturer — unless he teaches himself to disregard criticism and grows impervious to the national dislike of giving offense — usually finds that his voluntary lectures have vastly outnumbered the paid variety, and that his platform eloquence, far from being a financial asset, is a source of constant interruption and considerable expense.

No doubt it is because we regard lecturing as a free amateur entertainment rather than a serious economic proposition that English audiences are seldom either intimidating or critical. Most members of the British lecture-going public — which, in comparison with American listeners, is an extremely small proportion of the whole population — are themselves accustomed to get up and 'say a few words' at informal dinners, 'old school' gatherings, athletic clubs, women's institutes, or local government committees. They prefer to feel that they and the lecturer are informally discussing a subject together rather than that a 'celebrity' or an 'expert' is telling them what they ought to know.

With some English audiences it is almost a solecism for the lecturer to be too efficient. In the older universities, those traditional homes of sweetness and light, the members of the senior common rooms are moved by really eloquent lecturing to an antagonism which approaches contempt. The ringing voice, the dramatic gesture, savor to them of an exhibitionism incompatible with pure scholarship — as though the quest for truth somehow acquired greater integrity by being presented without charm or skill. The English academic world seldom awards its highest prizes to its most successful lecturers. Their lecture halls may remain full while the audiences of the mumbling scholars melt rapidly away, but



the appreciation of students does not count in England to the extent that it counts in America. Sometimes, when I was an undergraduate myself, it seemed to me that the very inability of a university lecturer to hold his audience appeared to his eminent contemporaries as a matter for congratulation. Had the enthusiasm of his listeners been greater, his colleagues' faith in his scholarship would certainly have been less.

### III

It is difficult for an English lecturer, accustomed to the tradition of good-humored, semiskilled amateurishness so congenial to the English spirit, — which expects something, but not a great deal, for nothing, — to realize the hard, exacting, and rigidly commercial standards to which he will be expected to conform when he crosses the Atlantic. Much of the failure of English lecturers in America is due to the happy belief that American audiences are delighted to pay the immense fees only merited by an outstanding professional performance for the same inept, unskilled exhibitions of public speaking which are offered gratis to English listeners.

The sooner it is realized that this comfortable notion is even riper for discard than Interallied debts for cancellation, the better it will be for Anglo-American relations. Should some nightmare future ever produce a war between the United States and the British Empire, the historians — if any — who record the subsequent Dark Ages will certainly have to include among the causes of conflict the long tale of inordinately remunerated 'high-hattings,' unprepared improvisations, social chitchats, and political gossipings meted out to American audiences as shoddy substitutes for the carefully reasoned addresses to which they justly believe that their high fees entitle them.

So habitual has this letting-down process become that American organizers are apt to show pathetic gratitude for any signs of industry on the part of English lecturers. I am told that Mr. Winston Churchill won high approval by recognizing the responsibility involved in his large guarantee and preparing a series of lectures worthy of the sum offered. Last spring Miss Phyllis Bentley, though less brilliant and dramatic than many English speakers, delighted her audiences by the obvious perseverance and skill with which she had collected and arranged her material. No remark of mine on American platforms was better received than the statement that a particular lecture had taken nearly a month to prepare.

American lecture agents would do well to explain more carefully to their prospective clients the standards of intelligence, eloquence, and (in the case of women lecturers) external decoration which the average American audience expects. If I was fortunate enough in my own tour to avoid some of the more egregious blunders characteristic of English visitors, I owe my good luck entirely to the vigorous and uncompromising realism with which the head of my New York publishing firm expounded the technique of the lecture business.

'Lecturing,' he had already warned me before I sailed from England, 'is a game which must be played by definite rules, for it is more affected by rules of thumb than most anything one could do.'

These rules, and the infinite possibilities of breaking them inadvertently, present his first problem to the English speaker, who has never conducted a lecture campaign with the same formality, never been hedged about with so many regulations as those stipulated in his contract (itself an alarming document with which no British lecture

agent would trouble his lecturers), and finally, and most formidably, never been the centre of so many conflicting interests.

The first essential for a lecturer — especially if he or she is an author — who desires a successful tour is not a fascinating personality, nor a resonant voice, nor a syllabus of arresting lecture titles, nor even the 'name' which originally attracted the interest of both agent and audiences; it is a training in diplomacy. Somehow or other the visiting author-lecturer, if he is not to return home a lugubrious failure, has to please his agent, his publisher, the organizers of the individual lectures, the audiences which gather to hear them, the press which reports them, and the principal bookstores in the city where the lecture is held. It would be a hard enough task to satisfy all these individuals if their interests were the same; but they seldom are. The agent is concerned with pleasing his organizers and the organizers with contenting their audiences; the press wants a 'story' which may be anything but the right type of publicity for the lecturer or his listeners; while the publisher — whose support is extremely valuable to the lecturing author — is interested in selling his books to the bookstores, and the bookstores in persuading the public to buy them.

Occasionally an agreeable coöperation does exist between the representatives of all these interests — in which happy and unusual event the lecturer heaves a sigh of relief, thanks God that hard work is so much less exhausting than diplomacy, and gives himself up to an orgy of handshaking, question answering, book autographing, and interviewing. When this coöperation is not forthcoming, his sense of being a bone between several contending dogs quickens until it fills him with dismay. In those disturbing situations in which the lecture organizer regards the book-

autographing demands of the local bookstore as an unwarranted encroachment upon the time of the lecturer-author for which organizer and audience have paid, the bewildered source of conflict is at his wit's end to know how to do justice to both his agent and his publisher.

It is seldom possible to foresee which of these alternative situations will develop, since organizers vary enormously in their demands upon the lecturer. Some regard the lecture itself as fulfilling his financial obligation to those who have promoted it, and are exceedingly generous in their estimate of the amount of time (which cannot possibly be exaggerated) that he requires for correspondence, bookstore visits, meals, packing, and telephone conversations. Others apparently consider themselves entitled to purchase the lecturer, body, soul, and spirit, from the time that he enters a city until the moment that he leaves it — usually by a midnight train after lecturing for one hour, answering questions for another, and autographing his books for a third.

#### IV

I am, of course, aware that diplomacy of this kind is a quality required by American as well as by English lecturers — though to a lesser degree, because errors of judgment are always more conspicuous in a foreigner. The English lecturer has, in addition, certain difficulties to face which arise from the mere fact of being English, and hence unfamiliar not only with the rules of the game, but with the varying psychology of audiences in different parts of the United States. In some regions, and especially, I found, in the Middle West, many listeners have an anti-English bias which they conceal with infinite care and cordiality, but which subsequently gives itself away in the expressions of relief and gratitude

which are forthcoming if the English lecturer avoids offending them in the way that they expect.

Once or twice, in spite of gracious words and welcoming faces, I have felt waves of hostility coming towards me from an audience before I have even begun to speak, and have discovered these to be due, not to a narrow Monroe-Doctrinism or to a stubborn Main Street psychology, but to errors of tact (to give them no worse a name) on the part of previous English lecturers.

It is, of course, possible that some temporary economic aberration may have overcome the charming speaker who had her hair shampooed in the beauty parlor of a Middle-Western woman's club and then charged the fee to the account of her entertainers who had extended to her the courtesy of their premises. But no such charitable explanation seems to fit the political lecturer who announced his anxiety to acquaint himself with the amenities of American home life, only to treat his locally distinguished hostess and his fellow guests with such condescending discourtesy that in at least one American city no private household will ever again run the formidable risk of offering hospitality to English lecturers.

How many other unhappy 'incidents' are due less to British *gaucherie* than to unexpected areas of American oversensitiveness it is difficult for an alien to estimate; I only know from several periods of residence in the United States that even after long acquaintance the possibility of saying or doing the wrong thing still remains terrifying. I had some bad moments recently when I left America without receiving a farewell letter or message from my lecture agent. This silence, I felt, was undoubtedly sinister. Which of the customary blunders had I unintentionally made? Was I guilty of the suggestion that some treasured piece of architecture, old in the eyes of a young

country, was new according to the standards of our ancient and shabby little island? Had I made some tactless reference to Interallied debts, or been too insistent on the subject of the League of Nations? It was a real relief when the agent's letter — forwarded from my publisher's office the day after I sailed — followed me to England with indications that I had apparently avoided those particular solecisms.

Perhaps, even by my fellow speakers, I may be forgiven for offering in the *Atlantic* one or two suggestions which might prevent that loss of habitual good manners which seems so inexplicably to have befallen one or two English lecturers in America. A first lecture tour might be preceded, for instance, by a visit to Washington, with its austere monuments to the great, and its long record of the illustrious dead in Arlington Cemetery. No one who has stood in the Lee house at Arlington, or has read the extracts from Lincoln's speeches on the marble walls of his memorial, could continue to regard America as a land of barbarians with no history worthy of the name.

A trial course of lecturing in England might also indicate at least some of the pitfalls of public speaking to those who have never lectured anywhere, yet who imagine that a fortune can be made in America by some trivial anecdotes or a few shallow witticisms if coupled with an ancient name, a military title, or a political ancestry. Sometimes I marvel at the patience and tolerance of American listeners who continue to invite English speakers to address them after the sorry treatment that they have often received at our hands, but I shall never cease to fear them for their critical judgment, their exacting standards, and the formality which regulates the whole process of American lecturing. Its very terminology suggests how formidable it is. In England a lecturer just turns up, but in America

he is always 'presented,' while the informal questions put by an English audience at the close of an address are elevated, by American listeners, to the dignity of a 'forum.'

## V

No aspects of American lecturing are more intimidating to English visitors than the size of both auditoriums and audiences, and the enormous distances which have to be covered by speakers who are accustomed to regard the four-hour run from London to Manchester as a long and tiring journey.

The immensity of American auditoriums seems to me yet another example of that national *Sehnsucht* for grandeur and enlargement which puts up a building of fifty stories in the midst of a hundred square miles of undeveloped prairie, and gives such a name as 'Grand Rapids' to an insignificant stream with a very small dam over which used to float the logs required for the local furniture-making industry. Only the other day, in New York, someone suggested to me that if we knew what lay behind the desire to build skyscrapers we should understand the fundamental fact of American psychology. It is, I suppose, this 'desire of the moth for the star' which makes America appear, to those Europeans who appreciate her zest for self-improvement, a Renaissance country alive with the experimental audacity of fifteenth-century Italy. Whenever I approach New York from the sea I am reminded of Leonardo da Vinci's symbolic prophecy: 'Man shall spread his wings and fly away like a mighty swan,' and I am physically in love with its climbing towers, its blue skies unobscured by the smoke and grime of resigned industrial England, its palpable and almost tangible vitality, its temples to those pagan deities of speed and human efficiency which have ousted the

old conventional gods of the chapels and churches.

For the same reason I am still able, for all my alarm, to feel a sense of admiration when I find in some little Midwestern town a Masonic temple, capable of accommodating a regiment, which looks forward to the day when that small settlement will be a large and flourishing city. The fact remains that English eyes, accustomed to the dimly lit soberness of provincial town halls and suburban Wesleyan chapels, are liable to be dazzled by the brilliance of American auditoriums, and English voices to be defeated by the effort of making the last row of listeners hear even the substance of the lecture.

The further the English lecturer penetrates into the resistant heart of the Middle West, the greater this problem of intonation and vocabulary becomes. Speakers who never receive complaints of inaudibility at home may well be forewarned of the disappointment they will suffer when from some huge Middle-Western audience which has apparently received a lecture with vociferous enthusiasm the criticism eventually comes that the lecturer could not be heard. Usually this does not really mean that his voice was inaudible, but that his unfamiliar pronunciation and choice of words were not understood. I realized how this could happen when I listened from the gallery of St. Thomas's Church in New York last November to ex-Governor Whitman giving his Armistice Day address with its eloquent plea for peace. Nothing could have been clearer than that deep, insistent voice, yet some quality in it defeated my English ears and I had continually to ask my companion for enlightenment.

This experience helped me to recover my vanishing sense of humor when a St. Louis newspaper described my normal university English as 'a pronounced accent' — a criticism which

would have rankled the more had I not immediately recalled our own patronizing habit of talking to American visitors about their 'accent' when they come to our shores. As Professor Gilbert Murray has commented in his recent *International Letter to Rabin-dranath Tagore*: 'The first step towards international understanding must be a recognition that our own national habits are not the unfailing canon by which those of other peoples must be judged, and that the beginning of all improvement must be a certain reasonable humility.'

His injunction is one which British lecturers in America would do well to bear in mind. However pure one's English, it is useless to be vain about it amongst the listeners of the Middle West, for no standard of purity avails when the language itself is becoming an alien tongue, and will one day, perhaps, sound as strange in American ears as the Anglo-Saxon from which our own speech is descended has become to modern England.

I never felt so much of a foreigner in the United States as on the October day when I discovered in Terre Haute, Indiana, a Labor Temple dedicated to the memory of the great Socialist, Eugene Debs, whose political education had been obtained in that small colliery town. Feeling that the origin and purpose of this building might well have interest for a member of the English Labor Party, I went in to make inquiries of the two local citizens whom I found in charge of the office. I put my questions and my fellow Socialists made replies to what they believed these inquiries to have been, but five minutes failed to enlighten them on the purpose of my visit, or myself on the origin of the temple. We parted with gestures of friendship and esteem, but, had they or I been speaking Hungarian, our mutual understanding would have been no less.

## VI

The intimidating distances to be covered throughout the whole vast territory between New York and San Francisco, and the conditions of living which so much traveling entails, explain a good deal of the disappointment felt by American listeners in English lecturers. Nearly all English speakers who are unfamiliar with the United States appear on American platforms at their worst instead of their best. Accustomed as they have been to short journeys, small halls, slow, benevolent audiences, and above all to frequent returns home to repack suitcases and answer correspondence, the perpetual driving activity of an American tour brings many of them before their hearers impaired by travel, fatigued by social functions, and nerve-racked after sleepless nights on long-distance trains.

I still shudder when I recall a fifteen-hour journey which concluded with a five-hour shaking up in a one-car train, with a temperature raised by the steam pipes to boiling point in sublime disregard of the fact that we were traveling across the sun-blasted Iowa prairies at the height of an October heat wave. After I had squirmed miserably for the first hour or so upon a burning red plush seat which suggested the presence of an open volcano immediately beneath, a characteristic Middle-Western dust storm blew up, filling the train with so much black grit that everything I was wearing had to go next day to the cleaners. From the junction at which I alighted, hot, late and dirty, I had to drive ten miles in a car to my destination, eat a hasty lunch, and appear on the lecture platform without having had a moment in which to change my traveling dress or get rid of the grit filling eyes, nose, mouth, and hair. Blind with dust, heat, and fatigue, I delivered the lecture as one in a nightmare and hardly realized what replies



I gave to the numerous questions from the audience composed of the local woman's club and a number of college students. My listeners, who had never before had an English lecturer, can hardly have derived from my grubby and exhausted person a favorable impression of the British race as a whole, but I suspect that even an English audience would have found me neither intelligent nor intelligible after such a journey. I envy many American lecturers their apparent ability to thrive under such conditions; the exploits of some of them must leave American lecture agents with a poor opinion of British powers of endurance. I doubt if the most impervious Englishman could rival the stalwart philosopher who, according to his gratified agent, gave eleven lectures a week for five months and made forty thousand dollars. These figures as I write them still seem to me incredible, but I believe that I recall them correctly.

## VII

In retrospect the inexhaustible hospitality that I received in America — the interrogative luncheons, the crowded teas, the dinners, drives, visits, and conversations, the long reception lines before lectures and the frequent political questionings which succeeded them and often extended far into the night — comes back to me as a triumphant kaleidoscope gay with spectacular colors, not one of which I should now wish to forgo. But my correspondence to friends at home during that period reveals a constant apprehension lest I should fail to deliver an adequate lecture after the expenditure of so much vitality upon other activities. The rôle of cinema star, however temporary, can only, I suspect, be effectively maintained after a long period of intensive training. And cinema stars, unlike most authors, can afford to travel with

secretaries who will dispose of the enormous correspondence which even on a short tour perpetually threatens to overwhelm the foreign lecturer who has no opportunity to return at intervals to his base.

Only second to the demands of 'fan mail' is the constant unpacking and repacking of suitcases, especially for a woman lecturer who is endeavoring to modify in her listeners the excusable American belief that all English women are homely and dowdy, addicted to heavy tweeds, large brogues, and thick woolen stockings. Since we are not all as drab as we are painted, it is worth while to dispel this illusion, but the endeavor to do so places on the traveling English woman who has not only to be the star performer, but her own maid, laundress, and secretary as well, a burden heavier than that of a man lecturer, and one seldom allowed for by listeners. I cannot recall how often on my recent tour I longed, almost with tears, for a traveling companion who would unpack the dress, shoes, and hat which had usually to be found and flung on — after a hasty steaming in the bathroom to eliminate the worst creases made by packing — immediately on arrival in each new city.

At the risk of being numbered with other transgressors from my country, I venture to doubt whether the amount of entertainment which normally accompanies lecture tours is the best policy when the lecturer is English. It is valuable, perhaps, in so far as it makes upon the lecturer that impression of gayety, kindness, and exuberant vitality which causes England to seem, by comparison, as flat as the plains of Illinois and not half so amusing. Personal contacts may be, in themselves, better worth while and more conducive to Anglo-American friendship than the most successful lectures, but they do not always produce the best results from the address as such. I remember

the strange amnesia that once seized me when I arrived at a university college after a sleepless night to find myself booked up for a series of interviews, a luncheon, a motor drive, a tea during which I stood, tealess, in a reception line for one and a half hours, a dinner, the lecture itself, and a press interrogation afterwards. The lecture passed off without mishap, but during the forum which followed I was asked a simple question about the Saar Valley and the probable outcome of the plebiscite. On this occasion the word 'Saar' awakened no responsive chord in my mind, although I had often heard the problem discussed at Geneva, and had once spent several days in Saarbrücken, where I interviewed the Governing Commission and was taken all over the Valley in one of its cars. I was obliged to reply to my questioner, lamely and inaccurately, that the Saar was not a subject I had studied. Never since the viva-voce which followed my finals at Oxford had I fallen victim to such a strange lapse of memory. The moral appears to be that most English lecturers are vulnerable creatures, the products of an old, slow civilization, for whose fragile equilibrium the vitality of American listeners at times proves overwhelming.

### VIII

'A Yankee' suggests, as a solution of this lecture problem, the limitation of America's annual quota of English

celebrities. I would certainly endorse the wisdom of such an expedient, which could easily be accomplished by automatically eliminating after their first visits the inept, the cantankerous, the 'high-hatters,' the gold-digging orators without professional qualifications, and the qualified specialists without platform technique. But I'd do more, and limit as well the extraneous demands made upon their lecturers by American listeners.

A few of us, after all, really do want to deliver the goods. We object to taking American money on false pretenses, and are anxious to give our lectures with zest and vitality, to marshal our prepared facts with intelligence, and to speak in voices audible to the back row of the gallery in the mammoth auditoriums of the remotest Middle-Western cities. But vitality and intelligence and audibility are qualities which demand a reasonable measure of physical fitness from the speaker, and physical fitness is difficult to maintain when the alien traveler's nerves are on edge from curtailed sleep and his unfamiliar voice is hoarse from incessant conversation.

For reasons which I have suggested here, I suspect that complete success in America is impossible for any English lecturer, but we should get nearer to giving our money's worth if our listeners had more mercy on our national limitations and remembered that we are but British.

# THE LITERARY WORKER'S POLONIUS

BY EDMUND WILSON

## *Nature of Magazines and Editors*

THE primary fact to be grasped about editors is that they are not independent agents, but function as parts of the larger organisms known as magazines. Magazines, like other living organisms, develop according to certain laws and pass through regular life cycles. These cycles may vary in length from a few years to many years; but they all complete the same cycle (unless they meet untimely ends): they have a youth, a maturity, and an old age. In its earliest years, a magazine may seem spontaneous, novel, and daring; but in its maturity it has, as the French say, 'taken its fold' and it succumbs to a force of inertia against which the youngest editor is as powerless as the oldest. Thereafter it grows old, declines, and dies.

Magazines have their principle of being in a relation between some part of the mind of the editor and some part of the mind of the public. They rarely represent the whole of the editor or the editor at his best; and they do not usually give the public all it wants. But the relationship, once established, cannot be altered. Both editor and reader may be bored by the contents of the magazine; but it will be impossible to introduce any novelty or to make any serious new departure. To his readers as well as to his contributors the editor may seem timid, pedantic, unimaginative, obsessed by

formulas. But anyone who has had anything to do with magazine offices knows that there is always a Higher Power involved which decides all important issues: the magazine as an entity in itself. And this entity is of a purely metaphysical character: it has nothing to do with commercial considerations. It can often be demonstrated that a drastic change in policy would increase the circulation of the magazine; but such a change is no more possible to effect than the transformation, by grafting on claws or wings, of one kind of animal into another.

Magazines cannot be born again. The most that can be done with a magazine is to subject it to a sort of face-lifting process, which, though it may improve its physiognomy at long distance, only exposes it on closer examination in a more hideous state of senility. Or, like the old *Dial*, it can be deliberately killed off, and the name taken for a new magazine. But the most that can be hoped for magazines otherwise is that they may grow old in decency and peace without lapsing from their original standards. All too often they linger on in a dotage or in a cheapened or degenerate form which disgusts their former readers.

## *Duties of the Editor to the Contributor*

The scope within which it is possible for the editor to exercise independent volition is thus seen to be narrowly

circumscribed. It is limited, in fact, to the purely business aspects of his dealings with his contributors. The selection of material is determined by the higher will of the magazine; but the editor can be more or less prompt in registering and conveying to the contributor the decisions thus arrived at. And there can be no question that the prompt communication of decisions is one of the editor's prime duties to his writers. The editor has a regular job; the writer very often has not, and he may depend for the very necessities of life on selling what he has written. He usually wants an immediate decision even though it may be adverse; such a decision would at least make it possible for him to send his manuscript elsewhere.

Some editors are efficient about this: Mencken and Nathan, for example, were remarkable for the definiteness and promptness of their decisions. But many editors are either the victims of extremely badly organized offices or completely lacking in consideration for writers, and cause by their negligence or irresolute stalling an immense amount of depression, exasperation, and sometimes even actual privation.

A piece of writing, once accepted, should be paid for immediately (if the finances of the publication permit it); and, once accepted, should be printed. In the first connection, the ideal method is that of one of the New York weeklies, which sends the check with the letter of acceptance. In the matter of printing, it ought to be said that there are sometimes extenuating circumstances, which the writer should understand and allow for. One of the editors may have pressed a decision in favor of accepting a manuscript which one or more of the other editors afterwards consciously or unconsciously sabotage; or an editor may sabotage a manuscript which he has been responsible for accepting himself.

Allowing, however, a certain small margin for sincere differences and doubts on the part of editors, it must be asserted, as a general thing, that the writer has just cause for complaint when an editor accepts his manuscript and then suppresses it by leaving it unpublished in the 'barrel.'

Connected with this is another matter which has probably caused between the editor and the writer more misunderstanding and more bitterness than any other aspect of their relations, and which has often for the writer, and sometimes for the editor, resulted in serious loss. This is the question of ordering things in advance. The task of making these decisions clear and afterwards keeping them straight is entirely in the hands of the editor, and it is sometimes not the least difficult of his problems, as the writer, through his eagerness for the order, will sometimes unconsciously do his best to mistake an expression of possible interest for a commitment to buy what he writes; but any editor with a rudimentary grasp of the responsibilities of his position will school himself never to leave any doubt as to whether or not an article is actually ordered and to stick by his order once it has been made. If the manuscript turns out too badly, he is not absolutely bound to print it; but he is certainly bound to pay for it and to give it back to the writer so that the latter may have a chance of publishing it elsewhere.

#### *Duties of the Writer to the Editor*

On the other hand, the writer should give the editor a reasonable length of time in which to decide and should not pester him with telephone calls and letters until a maximum of, say, two weeks has elapsed.

The writer should always have his manuscript typewritten, and he should

never send it in accompanied by a long letter, or, unless he knows one of the editors, by any letter at all. In the first place, these letters are rarely read; and in the second place, they usually have the effect of prejudicing the editor against the manuscript instead of interesting him in it. This prejudice is sometimes unfair on the editor's part, because the writing of the letter may have been due to a perfectly natural impulse on the part of an inexperienced writer. The writer has been a reader of the magazine and — especially if it is a magazine with editorials — he has, in his rôle of reader, been accustomed to being addressed by the editor in a friendly and even confidential manner. It seems to him logical that in sending in a manuscript he should himself address the editor. Inexperienced writers, however, should be warned that manuscript reading is one of the most trying of the editor's tasks and that the notion of reading long letters in addition is one which he rejects and resents. Manuscripts must speak for themselves, and letters can never help them. If the writer knows anyone on the staff who he imagines may be sympathetically disposed toward him, he may address his manuscript personally to this editor (though some magazines have tried to bar this): he may possibly get prompter consideration. But he should never write more than a line.

#### *Nature of Authors*

The relations between authors and reviewers are a constant source of anxiety to authors. To understand why this should be so, we must first examine the nature of authors.

Authors in the main are individuals who are preoccupied with constructing, peopling, and furnishing special intellectual worlds. They may be roughly divided into three classes: —

1. *Novelists.* Novelists are writers who make up fantasies about imaginary people. Novelists are sometimes friends, but the imaginary worlds they inhabit tend to be mutually exclusive. As a result, they seem ungenerous to one another, and it is sometimes superficially concluded that they are exceptionally vain and envious people. This is, however, not always the case. The pure type of novelist who merely reacts to life with no larger philosophical or historical interest naturally feels that the work of another novelist, especially if he is dealing with the same material, is a monstrous misrepresentation or even a deliberate imposture.

2. *Poets.* Poets are writers who use the technique of verse. This technique, though it was employed by the ancients for almost every form of human utterance, art, and record, is confined to-day to highly specialized uses. Where the novelist deals in character, situation, and adventure, the poet is usually limited to the expression of emotion and mood or to the simple description of things. The consequence is that being a poet is rarely a full-time job, and the poet has large spaces in his life which are not filled by his literary activity proper and in which he occupies himself intellectually by a kind of literary politics. Poets are likely to form into groups, which in their combinations, disruptions, and recombinations, their debates, practical jokes, and fierce battles, keep them in a continual state of excitement. In this group instinct they somewhat resemble painters — though painters, by reason of the fact that they practise a genuine handicraft instead of a purely intellectual métier, have a certain amount of physical work to tire them and are not so erinaceous as poets. The reactions of groups of poets toward each other correspond to the reactions of the individual novelists.



3. *Scientific, philosophical, and critical writers.* This class includes all those writers who are occupied with the attempt to present or to interpret known events, or to investigate the nature of reality. They are sometimes capable of a kind of collaboration hardly known among novelists and poets, because, where the materials are facts themselves, it usually requires more than one person to ascertain what the facts are and to organize them, and, where they are concerned with mathematical or metaphysical theory, a number of persons may be enlisted to develop the ramifications. Thus a number of writers of this kind may work together in the same field. Nevertheless, there are frequent cases of monopolies being attempted by individuals or groups and these lead to stupendous combats like the brawlings of Behemoth and Leviathan. Literary critics, it should be said, may sometimes develop the worst characteristics of novelists and poets.

(It may be suggested that the writers of fictionized biography and history make a fourth class which should be listed between classes 1 and 2; but the truth is that producers of books of this type are not genuine writers at all, but merely a kind of chimæra believed in by publishers during the Boom.)

It will be seen, then, that all the classes of authors tend to assume that their personally created worlds are authentic pictures or true hypotheses, and that they are profoundly disturbed when any other person does anything to upset this assumption.

The people who upset the author most in this way are the reviewers of his books. For an author, the reading of his reviews, whether they are enthusiastic or unfavorable, is one of the most disappointing experiences in life. He has been laboring for months or for years to focus some comprehensive

vision or to make out some compelling case, and then he finds his book discussed by persons who not only have not understood it, but do not even in some instances seem to have read it. In twenty-two reviews out of two dozen, either the reviewer has attempted nothing more than to give a description of the contents of the book and usually described them incorrectly (and these reviews are often copied word for word from each other), or his comments, either praise or blame, seem to have little or no relevance to the book which the author believes himself to have written. Reading reviews, indeed, lets the author down so after the excitement and satisfaction of finishing his book that there is a good deal to be said for the practice of those writers who go on trips to remote parts of the world as soon as their last proofs have been corrected.

In order to understand why the reviewer thus lets the author down, we must inquire as to what reviewers are and under what circumstances they do their work.

#### *Nature of Reviewers*

Reviewers may be classified under five heads:—

1. *People who want work.* Every magazine office is a clearinghouse for people who need money or need jobs: the waiting rooms are always full of college graduates, indigent radicals, escaped débutantes and wives, young boys who have just bummed their way from the Coast, and many other types of persons who want to write or to associate themselves with writing, as well as personal friends of the editors in difficulties. These people deserve considerate attention, if only because there are sometimes important writers among them; and it is customary on magazines with literary departments to try them out writing book reviews.

These book reviews are often very bad and not far, if at all, removed from school exercises. But the editor usually wants to pay for them because he knows that the writer needs the money, and when he has paid for them he feels that he ought to print them if they can by any means be made presentable. The best solution to this problem is probably that adopted by one of the New York weeklies. This magazine sells the extra books which come into the office for review and thus provides a permanent fund for the relief of needy writers so that it is unnecessary to purchase from them reviews which may turn out to be either unprintable or printable only at the expense of a great deal of drudgery on the part of the editor.

And to the groups mentioned above should be added the impoverished novelist or poet who, though admirable and expert in his own field, may have no aptitude or training for reviewing.

2. *Literary columnists.* The writer of a newspaper literary column has to read and talk about one or more books a day five or six days in the week. To go through all these books conscientiously and comment upon them thoughtfully is a task beyond human capacity; and in consequence it is not to be expected that these writers should produce much serious literary criticism. Some of them have no particular interest in books and are literary columnists merely by accident; others are rather well equipped persons who have to write so much and write it so fast that they are unable to do themselves justice. But in any case these writers are to be valued, not as essayists or critical authorities, but as chroniclers of the literary news, who manage more or less sensibly and more or less entertainingly to give, by a selection of excerpts or a swift résumé of a book's contents, a more or less

adequate idea of what is being published.

Where the newspaper reviewer is most likely to go wrong is in explaining the purport or the significance of a book. A short and concentrated piece of writing like a novel by Thornton Wilder or one of Ernest Hemingway's short stories is quickly read (the newspaper reviewer is delighted when he strikes something that he can get through very quickly), and the chances are that the reviewer will miss many things which the author has worked hard to make implicit in it, that he will in fact miss the point altogether. And in the case of a long book he is likely to skip through it, and so not only mistake the author's intention, but make blunders as to what is actually stated. When André Malraux's *Man's Fate* came out in English, for example, the newspaper accounts of the characters and the story seemed to me so different from what I remembered from reading it in French that I was driven to look up the translation. But the translator had in general been accurate: it was the reviewers who had sometimes been deceived through having so crowded and complicated a book to deal with. Yet it is also true that even in the case of such a short novel as Thornton Wilder's *Heaven's My Destination* one of the newspaper reviewers confused the characters. It may perhaps be demanded of the newspaper reviewer that he avoid this sort of literal inaccuracy, but even that is probably demanding a good deal and the most that one has a right to insist on.

3. *People who want to write about something else.* Book reviewing is often exploited, especially by the young, as a pretext for writing an independent essay on the same subject as that dealt with in the book or for neglecting the book altogether and writing an essay on some other subject. These reviews

are often bitterly resented both by authors and by conscientious critics; but anyone who has ever been an editor must regard them, if they are interesting in themselves, with a certain amount of leniency: it is so comparatively rare for an editor to get really interesting articles of any kind that he cannot afford to be grudging about them even when they displace proper book reviews. The author may console himself with the thought that the review which he would otherwise have had would probably have been as poor as most reviews.

We may also treat under this head the problem of young people in general. Should a brilliant but inexperienced young writer be allowed to do a mature writer flagrant injustice by a brilliant but uncomprehending review? The young ought to have a chance to write and their point of view is sometimes important, even when aside from the mark. The answer is that, since magazine editors usually lack the willingness or the time to perform also the functions of English professors, older writers will have to resign themselves to be sometimes mistreated by youth.

And there are also the embittered old who are irked at being obliged to do reviews and who take it out in putting the young in their places and undermining their more conspicuous contemporaries.

4. *Reviewer experts.* The extremely unsatisfactory results in many cases of having books of poetry reviewed by persons who have never written verse, works of philosophy reviewed by persons with no philosophical training, and so forth, lead editors to get poets to review poets, philosophers to review philosophers. The trouble with this, however, is that the philosopher or the poet is likely to belong to the same school or to an opposing school, and in either case the review may be biased

and give a totally false impression of the book.

5. *Reviewer critics.* These are extremely rare. Most people who are capable of first-rate criticism do not want to interrupt their other work for jobs as badly paid as book reviews. First-rate regular weekly or monthly reviewing is particularly rare. Exceptional cases were Van Wyck Brooks and Mencken; but the former was rather narrowly specialized, and the latter has always tended to use book reviewing as a way of putting over his own personality and opinions. The only writer who has tried recently to do this kind of thing the way ideally it ought to be done was a second-rate man, Stuart P. Sherman. Such a reviewer should be more or less familiar, or be ready to familiarize himself, with the past work of every important writer he deals with and be able to write about an author's new book in the light of his general development and intention. He should also be able to see the author in relation to the national literature as a whole and the national literature in relation to other literatures. But this means a great deal of work, and it requires a certain amount of training. Sainte-Beuve worked all week for his *Causeries du Lundi*, hardly taking time out for lunch. But Sainte-Beuve was perhaps a unique case. Has there ever been another example of a man of Sainte-Beuve's abilities devoting so large a part of his life to weekly articles on miscellaneous subjects?

I want to suggest, however, that it might be a profitable idea for some editor to get some really able writer on literature and make it worth his while to do a weekly article. For a man who should combine a sound education with intelligence and literary ability he would probably best go to the universities, where the *Herald Tribune* got Stuart Sherman and the *New*

*Masses* Granville Hicks. Let him take, say, a Newton Arvin or a Haakon Chevalier, impose upon him no editorial duties or any duties that would impede his weekly article, — Burton Rascoe's weekly articles suffered, when he ran the *Herald Tribune* book section, from his having too much to do, — and pay him enough to live on without his being obliged to resort to other work. He should not be expected to cover what is published, but to write each week of a man or a book. I believe that such a feature would prove both valuable to the magazine and an excellent thing for the literary world in general.

#### *Attitude of the Author toward the Reviewer*

It will thus be seen that the author has no justification in expecting serious criticism from reviewers, and that in becoming indignant or elated over reviews he is merely wasting his nervous energy.

His reviews, if he knows how to read them, may have for the author a certain interest; but it is unlikely that he will be able to find out from them much that is important about the value of his work. For this he will have to depend on other sources, such as remarks made in casual conversations and evidences of his effect on other writers — always bearing in mind, however, that the true excellence or badness of what he has written may never really be understood during his lifetime: a chance for which we must all be prepared. And in the meantime he must read his reviews, not as the verdict of a Supreme Court of critics, but as a collection of opinions by persons of various degrees of intelligence who have happened to read or look into his book. Considered from this point of view, there is sometimes something to be learned from them.

#### *Special Psychology of Reviewers*

The reviewer, like other kinds of writers, has his ego; and, as he is continually occupied with other people's books, it is somewhat difficult for this ego to assert itself. What usually happens is that the reviewer gives himself a vicarious sense of creation by helping up and introducing new writers who have been previously unknown; but when a writer is already known the reviewer gives himself a sense of power by making the gesture of putting him down. This psychology must always be reckoned with. During the last few years one has seen a number of writers first cried up, when they were still obscure, by the more discerning critics and then afterwards disparaged by the same class. This has happened in turn to Eugene O'Neill, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Ernest Hemingway, and Thornton Wilder. It is the rarest thing in the world at the present time to find a word of intelligent critical comment on any of these writers. And the unfortunate Mr. Saroyan has been put through the cycle in record time. He had already been discovered by the editors of *Story* and had acquired a reputation among its readers. Then, when his book was published, he got some prompt enthusiastic reviews. He had now been triumphantly brought out, and after this there was nothing left for the later reviewers but to try to make him ashamed of himself.

#### *Duties of the Reviewer to the Author*

On the other side, however, the reviewer has certain obligations in relation to the author.

I have recommended lenience toward reviewers who use the books they are supposed to be reviewing as pretexts for expressing themselves; but this leniency is to be approved only in the event — and it happens comparatively

rarely — that their articles are actually interesting. There is no excuse for an uninteresting review which does not tell anything about the book. At the least, the reviewer should supply information. The retelling of the story of a novel, the summary of an historical or philosophical book, the selection of representative passages and the communication of the quality of a poet, is the most boring part of the reviewer's business, but it is an absolutely essential part. An attempt should be made to give the reader an opportunity to judge for himself whether or not he would be interested in the book irrespective of what the reviewer may think of it; and it is an indispensable discipline for the reviewer (or for any other kind of critic) to have to restate the gist of the book in his own words. The critic, when he sets about this task, is quite likely to find that there is more in the book, or less in it, or something different in it, than he imagined when he first went through it. If the author is incoherent or woolly, the critic will be able to detect it. If the reviewer is incompetent, his incompetence will be disclosed to more intelligent or careful readers when they find out that he does not know what is in the book.

The failure to follow this procedure has produced those pretentious æsthetic, social, and metaphysical essays which, especially in the more highbrow magazines, are sometimes hung on the names of new books. The reader has no means of knowing, if he has not himself read the books, whether they prove the critic's points or not: the titles are merely used as counters to which, for the reader, no value has been assigned. It is as important for the critic to establish definite values for the books which he discusses in an essay as it is for the novelist to establish personalities for the characters who figure in his story.

### *Attitude of the Author toward His Public*

Another class of persons toward whom the author should adopt an unemotional attitude are the writers of letters. Most of these fall into the following categories:—

1. *Insane people and cranks.* The author should be able to identify these and should remember that people in abnormal states of mind are likely to be set off by anything.

2. *Lonely women and persons in provincial isolation.* Of these people, even though they are sane, very much the same thing is true: the fact that they write the author letters signifies merely that they want to communicate with somebody and does not necessarily imply any interest or merit on the part of the author's books.

3. *Young people who want the author to read their manuscripts.*

4. *People who want the author's autograph.* These, for the most part, either want it for a collection, and have no interest in the author's books, or want it simply to sell.

Besides these, the author will get a few letters from people who are interested in what he has written and have something to say to him about it. But in general it may be said that the letters received by authors mean nothing. No writer who has been an editor can ever take letters so seriously as writers who have had no such experience often do. Every editor knows that it is impossible to publish anything in a magazine so bad that some reader will not write in to say that it is masterly or anything so good that some reader will not write in to denounce it.

### *Duty of the Public toward the Author*

One should never send manuscripts to authors. They have enough to do



writing their books. If authors read all the manuscripts sent them, they would never be able to do anything else. The author of a manuscript who desires advice should send it to a publisher or an editor: they pay people to do this kind of work.

### *Duty of Authors to Other People*

The author should not make a practice of sending out to his friends, or to persons whom he does not know but admires, large quantities of inscribed copies of his books. In the first place, he will be out of pocket if he exceeds the publisher's quota of free copies. In the second place, inscribed books from the author are likely to prove a nuisance: the person to whom the book has been sent is likely to feel that he ought to read it and yet at the moment he may not be able to — so that he will go around having it on his mind that he ought to have written the author. And when he does read it he may feel that the flattering or affectionate inscription obliges him to be nice about it, whether he really likes it or not. A book sent in this fashion is really a sort of bribe which may prevent the reader from giving the candid opinion which the author supposes himself to value.

The author should not send people books unless he is very certain either of their interest in his books or of their not being bothered by having them around unread.

### *Duty of the Novelist to the Public and the Profession*

The novelist should never put at the end of his novel a date of the following kind: —

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER—HOBOKEN  
December 1934—January 1935

This kind of thing has been done ever since Joyce dated *Ulysses*: —

TRIESTE—ZURICH—PARIS, 1914–1921

But Joyce had a right to date *Ulysses*, because it had taken him seven years to write, and the date was really a part of the story: Dedalus had told the Dubliners in 1904 that in ten years he would produce something important. But it is a mistake for other writers to imitate this, because, in the first place, it is dangerous to suggest a comparison with Joyce; and, in the second place, such dates are irrelevant. Date and place may be in order for a poem, because they add something which helps in understanding it and which cannot be conveniently introduced into the poem itself. But if a novelist is successful, he has interested us in characters and events which are supposed to have nothing to do with himself, and has induced us to accept their reality; and it is an impertinence to his own creation to remind us of himself and where he worked. If the novelist has been unsuccessful, the reader, when he has got through the novel, does not want to be reminded of the author and Boulogne-sur-Mer.

# 'HOT BEHIND ME'

BY WILLIAM WISTER HAINES

ALWAYS Benson had hated the Duke; that is, almost always. Men divide time by experience. For Benson everything before the night of Harry's death had sloughed away. And everything since then was a dark blur, lit only by the smouldering of his slow anger.

## I

With their bellies full and the sharp heat of the open fire baking their faces and overalls, most of the linemen lolled contentedly through the last minutes of the lunch hour. On top, in the web-like maze of poles and wires, the afternoon wind would bite, but under the lee of the track fill there was warmth even in the pale November sun. Cantrell, the foreman, had just won a hard struggle with the formal polysyllables of a Safety First bulletin from the railroad's Electrification Department. He thrust it into his overall bib with relief.

'So, all that really means is we get fifteen minutes more to eat — and ride the local home instead of the express. That about *hazards* means for you linemen to use your safety belts all the time and not drop no tools nor bolts on the grunts. . . . And that about *energization* means that all four track circuits and that signal circuit on yonder side is still hot, savvy?'

The linemen nodded. Most of them had arisen and were buckling on belts, examining safety straps, and loading

their helpers with tools and rigging for the afternoon's work.

One of them had not arisen. There were hard-lived years in his face and eyes. Older than the others, older even than Cantrell, he was the only man among them not smoking. He chewed with a savage flexing of ridgy jaw muscles. At the conclusion of the safety orders he had only quenched an ember disdainfully. Two of the younger linemen had nudged each other and stolen furtive glances at him.

'So there's the new orders and it's time to go back to work. These orders' — Cantrell hesitated — 'they're put out by some of them brass hats in the office. I could n't rightly read the man's name what signed 'em no way. But the Duke says they're all right and we're to follow 'em just like they was his'n.'

At the mention of the general foreman's nickname the man by the fire exploded blasphemy. The quality of his rage electrified the trite familiar oaths. The commotion stopped and Cantrell faced the cursing.

'Shut up, Benson, and listen to your orders!'

A helper who had been standing between the two stepped back quickly. But Benson subsided and Cantrell continued.

'Kendall and Reynolds, put on that cross arm. Braithewaite and Benson, drill these holes under the beam. Kennedy and . . .'

Benson did n't hear the rest of it.

He arose, swung his big belt around him, and buckled it. His skates were at the pole base. He walked over and buckled them on without looking back. He did n't even look up or stand out from under as Braithewaite, with the handline dragging from his belt, clanged his skates harshly into the flanges of the pole and began his perpendicular ascent. He knew Braithewaite would n't fall on him. The boy could flutter up and down a pole like a hummingbird. Steel skates seemed to be a part of his feet.

Braithewaite did n't fall. Forty feet above Benson he stopped his swift ascent, whipped his safety belt around the pole, and buckled it. Then, leaning back trustfully in the leather harness, he stepped onto the first of the steel steps and took off his skates.

As he climbed after the boy, Benson's rage did not abate. He was not resentful of the foreman's curt rebuke. He'd been a foreman himself. Once he would have fired a man for arcing as he had just done. But he was no longer a foreman. He was just a line-man again now, and an old one at that. He was thirty-eight.

For twenty years he'd been climbing poles and towers, spending most of his life within reach of high-voltage electricity. And now some young fool in the Safety First Department had discovered that line work was dangerous. And so he was to take his working orders from a man that likely as not had never even climbed a pole, let alone lowered dead linemen down off one.

He'd lowered plenty and he'd live to lower plenty more of these young fools that called him Old Benson. Yes, and get drunk the night after and go in to work drunk the next morning and slap the general foreman's face if he fired him for it. He'd done it all before and he could do it all again. Not slap the Duke's face, of course; much as

he'd like to, he had n't done that. No one else had, either. But he'd shown other general foremen in his time. And even if they put you in jail they had to feed you.

'If the Law was to see your face like it is now, Benson, they'd make you wear a muzzle. How come you're so grouchy?'

His rage had carried him, unconscious of the climb, to Braithewaite's level. Benson liked his pole buddy. Braithewaite neither avoided him cautiously nor whispered behind his back as the others did. He kidded him impudently about the seventeen years' difference in their ages. And he was the only man in the gang fast and sure enough to team with Benson. The older man respected him, but to-day he was not in the humor for trifling.

'You ain't old enough to understand if I told you!'

'Well, now, that's a right pert answer for a old man. And a answer no one could n't never throw back at *you*, neither!' He grinned as he rigged the handline. 'But I would n't let that grouch eat you too hard. You'll be dead before long and then the company won't bother you like this!'

'They don't bother me. They don't bother me at all. They can all go to hell! I've worked for plenty companies and I can work for plenty more, and if they bother me I'll tell 'em!'

'So it *ain't* the company? I expect now maybe it was your rich uncle left you out of his will?'

Braithewaite, always a fast worker, had already slipped up onto the beam and walked its narrow surface out over the first of the four tracks it bridged. Still belted to the pole, Benson watched their ladder rising in regular jerks as the grunts pulled the handline.

'Hold it, hounds!'

The handline held the ladder swinging idly at his shoulder while he studied the prerequisite problem of rigging.

## II

Below Braithewaite and eleven feet across empty space from Benson, the wire over which they must work sagged from the supporting beam. It was hot, but Benson could n't think of it in terms of peril. The peril in it was too familiar and too incomprehensible. There was nothing in the appearance of that sooty copper thread to indicate the dimension of its power, power that could pull a hundred-car freight train. And his mind avoided its recollections of that power accidentally unleashed.

No. He thought of it calmly. It was fourteen thousand volts; it was hot. They had to work on the under side of the beam from which it hung. There would be four feet of copper strap and eighteen inches of porcelain insulators between the beam and the live wire. In that narrow clearance they must suspend their ladder for a scaffolding, high enough to be out of danger of the wire and low enough so that they could drill holes through the under side of the beam flange. It would be a cramped place to work.

'Open that grouchy mouth now, old man, and I'll throw this sling right in it. Then you can lash it to the ladder and I'll pull it right to me.'

He nodded approval. He was too much used to catlike grace to admire the way Braithewaite had walked the twelve-inch beam. And he was too much used to coolness and agility to admire the way his partner was now hanging in his belt from the under side of the beam, three feet above the live current, ten feet above the smokestacks of the occasional steam locomotives which the electrification was antiquating, and thirty-odd feet above the steel rails of the track level. That was all just routine for a good lineman. But Braithewaite's rigging was n't routine. It was expert.

He watched the boy coil the dry rope. He raised his hand and nodded. Miraculously the rope uncoiled in sure flight across the hot wire and into Benson's big hand. For the second it took Benson to lash it, Braithewaite held the line taut. Then steadily and surely he pulled his end of the twelve-foot ladder over the hot wires and balanced it easily on his knees while he lashed it to the beam above him.

'Got her, old man. Hook your end a hair higher and the one of us on the top side'll get a better pull on the ratchet.'

Nimble still for thirty-eight, Benson slipped up onto the beam. His ~~hand~~ signaled once; the grunts bent on the handline, moving the ladder into place for him. His gloves flashed in and out among the lash lines, and then, without even stopping to look at the knots, he slipped down under the beam and eased his weight gently onto the ladder. It scarcely swayed beneath his sure balance.

'You better hook that belt onto something or grow you some wings, Benson. These ladders been known to break.'

'I've seen more of these ladders break than you've seen kindling wood. When I want advice about using a belt I'll ask for it!'

'All right, ask. And they'll tell you to belt yourself right to that pearly gate—on the *outsidel*!' Braithewaite's grin softened his sarcasm. 'It won't break none of my bones if you take a dive!'

Benson buckled his belt, but his voice stung. 'Bunch of damned foolishness to worry so about belts. When I begun climbing, the Man'd fire you if you knowed what a belt was. Linemen used their butts for shock absorbers instead of hanging harness on 'em. We used to work where you had to hold onto a piece of lashing with your teeth!'

'Sure you did. And where are the guys that done it? I figure to use a belt and save my teeth for the meals they never got.'

But Benson was bawling to the obedient grunts.

'Are you going to send them drilling tools up here, or wait till rust makes these holes?'

The drilling tools hopped upward as the grunts bent again on the hand-line. Braithewaite stopped the pulling and untied them while Benson, lying at ease on the ladder, marked out the drill lines with a steel square and a screwdriver which his big hand dwarfed like a pencil. Still on his back, he made, with a centre punch and hammer, two tiny indentations in the hard steel.

'Check 'em with your brains, kid, and let's set up the old man and punch 'em through.'

Braithewaite checked the indentations with his rule. 'O.K., but it's going to be hard to feed oil to it under this beam. We better get some water up here and spit on it.'

Benson produced a plug of tobacco. 'This'll keep it wet and cool too,' said he. He looked warily up and down the track that ribboned endlessly away below their perch. 'How long we got, flogger?'

The flagman below them consulted his watch. 'Twenty-one minutes on the eastbound without there's a extra.'

'All right. We're setting it up. Any one of you grunts that fools around under this ladder's just growing him a headache!'

The helpers moved ostentatiously back. Braithewaite stood up on the ladder, leaned back hard on the belt that held him to the beam, and for a tense few seconds juggled the heavy rack into place. The ladder swayed crazily and then, as he found his balance, steadied. His torso flexed hard, his patient strength forced the rack

into position. Benson adjusted the clamp and tightened it with glinting strokes of his wrench.

'Outa your strain, kid. I got it.'

Braithewaite relaxed and eased himself down onto the ladder again.

'I never do set that dern thing up without wondering what kind of a card game it'd spoil if we dropped it through a Pullman roof.'

Braithewaite swung the ratchet drill into place, plumbed it with a critical eye, and locked it into the rack. Now he took one of Benson's gloved hands and folded it gently over the handle.

'It just fits,' he drawled. 'We got about ten inches of steel to drill this evening and if you can't work your grouch out on that you better reach down for that wire under us and burn it out! Let's see you get hot or go home!'

Benson got hot. He shifted once for position on the rocking ladder, splashed a brown trajectory of tobacco juice on the drill point, and his massive shoulder began to move with easy rhythm to the tune of the ratchet's clicking. Tiny threads of steel shaving and red lead appeared like antennæ at the drill point. The antennæ became respectable shavings, razor thin, shiny and clean, that danced and shimmered about the disappearing point. Braithewaite tightened the compression screw, lit his pipe, and waited his turn.

### III

A hundred yards down the track the flagman waited to warn them of locomotives that would blast them with smoke and soot. Below them at the pole base their grunts waited to pull, up the new fittings when the holes were drilled. And below them less than three feet, passive, implacable, unrelenting, waited always the fourteen thousand volts that were their peril and their livelihood.



Of the voltage Benson thought, as he drilled, no more than usual. It was there, it was hot, they must keep out of it. For him that consciousness had assumed the proportions of an instinct. In emergencies it took on the simplicity of a reflex. The monotony of drilling released his mind for more complex thinking.

Anger still inflamed his thoughts. His hatred for the Duke had spread to include all authority. They were all against him, against him just because he was old and could remember the good old days — the days before blueprints and careful accounting and this new, everlasting Safety First. It was just like the Duke to take up with these new ways and preach about Safety First. It had probably been his idea to lengthen the lunch hour. His mind groped for the phrase: 'to provide a longer period of rest and relaxation.' Something like that, anyway. But it did n't fool Benson. It was just another sneaking company trick to keep them from riding the express home. It would mean an extra fifteen minutes of winter noons huddled by a fire in the swirling cinders of the track fill. Missing the express would rob them of forty minutes — forty minutes waiting in the cold instead of the comfortable saloon that had become Benson's habitual refuge from days aloft in the winter wind. Yes, it was the Duke's fault. The Duke would n't even have given him this job if he had recognized . . .

'Gimme at that drill, Benson. You're too old to punch 'em through at one shot!'

Braithewaite's voice startled him. He buttoned his overall jumper, flooded the half-drilled hole with brown foam, and relaxed. He did n't feel restful, though. The exertion had only warmed him. He would n't be tired for hours.

Diagonally below the linemen on the highroad that paralleled the railroad tracks was a steady stream of cars —

open cars with the tops down and furred young people in them speeding to the football game. He cursed aloud.

'What's eating you now, old man?'

'Look at them young idiots!'

'I been looking at them. I could do more than look at some of them girls. What's wrong with 'em?'

'Wrong with 'em? What's wrong with 'em? Riding around the country like a bunch of hoodlums and us up here working our guts out while they go to a football game!'

'Well, if I wanted to go to a football game I'd go. I would n't just set here and crab about it.'

'I would n't go if they was to pay me!'

'They won't. I been to one and that ain't the way they work it. It ain't so much at that. You're better off to save your money and then get drunk on it.'

Benson grunted. He'd get drunk, all right. It was pay night and he had n't been drunk for a week. He'd get drunk at Clancy's and then go beat up that bartender at Kelly's who'd refused to put it on the cuff for him on Wednesday. He'd take his pliers and they could have all the bung starters they wanted. Habit slipped his hand to his plier scabbard, and his grip compressed their tensioned handles. Yes, by God, he'd take his pliers! He had smashed his way out of barroom brawls with them before. If he'd had them on Wednesday night when those three bums . . . or if he'd had Harry Kilvain.

He shivered a little, and not from the rising November wind. He'd thought of Harry more in this week than in the last eight years. No good came of it, either. But he did think of it and his glove unconsciously traced the furrow of scar under his hair. But for the blow that left that scar, he would be as dead as Harry.

He'd known it even before he started for Harry. He'd known it before he'd seen the flame burst from his shirt. He'd been watching his partner from the deck of the wire train twelve feet below the maze of wire that Harry was climbing through on that fateful winter night. He'd seen the wind hit him, seen the lurching roll swing the long leg past the protecting insulators, seen his partner writhe and stiffen with horror frozen forever into his last expression. He had sprung for the ladder, but the Duke, who was only a train foreman then, had been quicker.

'He's dead! You can't help him! You'll just kill yourself!'

He knew it, but that madness of the sight was in him and he'd swung to knock the Duke out of the way. He'd awakened days later with a skull cracked by the foreman's ruthless pliers. And afterwards, when the other men came and told how the Duke had held them at bay till the wire burned through, he only sneered.

The foreman had been right. He had proved his capability by saving the others and his courage by extracting the body from the lethal tangle with his own hands later on. But Benson had never forgiven him, and never would. There had been one chance in a thousand (Benson knew it was not more) that Harry might have been knocked from the octopus grip of the hot wire and might have survived the forty-foot fall to the rails of the track below.

After that Benson had wandered the country alone, working when he had to and drinking hard when he was flush.

Habit still took him to work sober, but his reputation had fallen. There had been a night, and he was cold sober too, when he had awakened again and again from that nightmare of flames around Harry and the blow on his head. The next day he had dropped

a thousand dollars' worth of insulators and smashed them into talcum powder. Luckily no one was under them. He'd been fired and he'd beaten up the general foreman. The story had spread among the scattered line gangs of the country and made him a redoubtable figure. But it had spread among the companies too, and he had had to change his name and grow a moustache to get jobs after that. And he did n't have the friends he once had. Some of his contemporaries had been killed and some had drifted out of line work. Some had been promoted and remembered him all too well. Only hunger had nerved him to risk his disguise against the Duke's memory for this job.

'Come out of it, old man, and wet that hole for me before I burn this drill off!'

He shook himself and sat up. He had n't spat in the hole for an eighth of an inch. The drill was hot; a wisp of steam arose from the brown foam. His legs and feet were cold and the sweat had dried on his shoulders.

'Feed that ratchet, kid, and I'll show you how a *man* heats a drill.'

'I was just studying whether to wake you up or fold one of them paws over this handle and let you drill in your sleep.'

'Sleep!' with scornful anger. 'I could do more work in my sleep than you do the best waking day you ever had!'

'You might *could*; but I know for a fact you don't *do*. If I was twins, this job'd be done and the new wire shot hot by now!' He stretched luxuriously on the ladder and buttoned his jumper. 'Wake me up if you see the Duke coming.'

'Ain't you afraid you'll fall off there and break a safety rule?'

'No. What would the Devil want with a green kid like me when he could get a experienced old sinner like you

right off this same ladder?' He closed his eyes. 'Don't you fret about it though, old man. I believe he's going to let you ripen up here a few days more if you just keep that belt buckled and don't force his hand.'

## IV

Round and round, half a circle at a stroke, the drill bit into the beam and the shimmering steel danced like platinum curls, broke under its own weight, and fell flashing and gleaming to the track. And back and forth Benson's shoulder rolled, with productive economy of strength and motion. Twice he spat with unfailing accuracy into the deepening hole and occasionally he tightened the compression screw that held the drill into the beam with unrelenting pressure. But these were actions as mechanical as the roll of his shoulder. His mind was free to hate again.

If he were in a wire train he'd show them. In a wire train you got chances. You just waited for the right time when the whole train was working like mad with maybe only four minutes to finish the job and get back into the siding to clear an express. Then you'd foul something on the sly — smash some insulators — foul some blocks to an outrigger stirrup or bend a wire too short for a fitting. If you were smart, nobody even knew who'd done it. And you could always claim it was a mistake, anyhow.

And then there'd be hell to pay for all hands on deck, a frenzy to unfoul, the flagman running for the signal tower to stop the express, the straw boss sprinting up the track to set a red flare. And the next day an investigation and the whole company catching hell for disrupting running schedules. But . . . he wasn't in a wire train now.

The Duke had looked at him hard

when he hired on here and said: 'Ground and ladder gang, Benson. Report to Cantrell at six-thirty in the morning!'

He'd started to protest that he was still young and fast enough for the intermittent frenzies of the wire trains that had to clear both hot wire and expresses on a two-minute notice. But the Duke's eyes had stopped him. And he'd remembered that 'Benson' did n't dare to be conspicuous. So he had just nodded: 'Yes, sir.'

That was the way his linemen spoke to the Duke. And most of the young saps liked it, too. They'd call him Duke or use his first name as freely as they liked socially. But on the job it was 'sir' and they jumped when he spoke. And they'd work their guts out for him.

The flagman's whistle skirled: 'Hot rail on One. Hot, oh, hot!'

The grunts reëchoed the cry and pointed to the column of smoke that the approaching locomotive was belching. Benson glanced at Braithewaite's safety and then kicked his partner gently.

'She's blowing it high, kid. Better duck your face.'

Braithewaite eyed the train disgustedly. 'The flagger ought to make that feller cut his blower under us. I hope this ladder'll hold the weight of all them cinders that'll be in our clothes and hair in a minute.'

From the bolt bib of his overalls Benson produced a piece of ballast rock the size of a lemon.

'This ladder'll be lighter by the weight of this if that guy does n't cut his blower. I've had my overalls burned three times this week and I'm tired of it.'

He curled his fingers over the rock and his eyes were evil as he juggled it expectantly. Instantly Braithewaite's foot flashed; the rock spun harmlessly to the rails below. Benson's hand went

for his pliers and then stopped on the scabbard. Braithewaite's pliers were already out. Benson cursed and locked his head in his burly arms.

Slowly Braithewaite raised his arms and locked them under his chin. The pliers remained in his hand; his eyes narrowed, but did not close on Benson. A long swish softened the roar of the train; the column of smoke stopped abruptly fifty yards from them. Only the deafening noise and a pale watery cloud of vapor reached them as the express hurtled below. From the corner of an eye that never left Benson, Braithewaite saw the receding engineer wave to them and then, pulling his blower, blast the skies again with smoke and cinders. Benson lowered his arms.

'He did cut that blower this time, did n't he?'

'Yeah.' And still Braithewaite did not return his pliers to their scabbard. 'You got any more of them rocks, Benson?'

'No.' Benson's eyes were on the pliers. 'What did you kick that one out of my hand for?'

'So I would n't have to beat your brains out with these.' He shook the pliers gently. 'You was going to throw it, was n't you?'

'Hell, yes, if he did n't cut that blower. They got orders to cut them blowers. They just singe us for meanness. If you bounced a rock off one of 'em you'd cure that nonsense. I'm fixin' to do it, too.'

'Not off no ladder I'm working on, you ain't.' The pliers moved gently again. 'If you got to kill you a engineer, take the number off his train and do it in the evening. But don't never let me see you throw nothing heavier than a bucketful of water at one with a load of passengers behind him!'

Benson laughed unnaturally, but his eyes never left the pliers.

'All right, kid. Keep your shirt on.'

## V

Benson's hand moved with disarming deliberation to the handle of the ratchet. The steady clicking resumed its even sound, and Braithewaite's pliers reëntered their scabbard with a negligent thrust. Now he grinned at Benson.

'Dern if you don't hate the whole world to-day, old man. You been arcing like a wet switch all afternoon. You reckon I'll be that mean when I get old and feeble like you?'

Benson only snorted and stuck to his drilling. He was angrier than he had been, but there was fear in his anger now. Braithewaite's jocularly had relieved the tension, but both of them had felt it — both knew that Benson had backed down. Braithewaite's clemency emphasized his victory.

Nor did Benson's rage focus on the no longer watchful boy. His inner mind knew that Braithewaite had been right, but his liking for the kid could forgive even that. No, his rage would not focus; he liked Braithewaite. He had forgotten the engineer. And yet his world was askew. He had no clear remembrance of conflict. The actual circumstance was blurred in his rage. The appalling fact that he had been dominated by a kid of twenty-one, that for the first time in his life he had backed away from a plier fight, was too new, too sharp. He could n't assimilate it. And so he snarled and transferred the heat of his brain to the twirling drill point.

Abruptly the drill wobbled and slipped from the rack.

'First to-day, kid.'

Braithewaite sat up and scrutinized the hole. 'Good hole!' he pronounced. 'I rigged the rack so we could get the next one without moving. Run the screw down and we'll punch another.'

They set the drill again and Braithewaite loosened his jumper.

'Cool off a spell, old man, and keep your legs out from under. They's going to be shavings come out of here big enough to bust a leg if they fell on it!'

Benson grunted noncommittally and sank back on the ladder to rest. It was after two now and the heavy traffic on the road had found its way to the football game. One of the grunts was rebuilding the luncheon fire to warm their long wait. There was cold moisture in the sharpening wind.

## VI

By four-thirty they had drilled eight holes. Three times they had moved rigging and ladder safely across the beam, four times they had removed dull bits. Four ounces of Benson's tobacco had evaporated from the under side of the beam. Their overalls were covered with shards of fresh-cut steel already browning with rust. And gleaming silver cored through the red lead of the beam in evenly spaced pairs was the result of their expended strength and skill. The linemen were tired now — not spent with exhaustion of great effort, but tired with the inevitable fatigue of a fair exchange of strength and time for the holes that showed behind them. Four hours of their lives — an incalculable but definite part of their expendable strength. . . . It seemed oddly irrelevant to the arrival of the paymaster and the checks that had fluttered up the handline to them.

They were good checks, over a hundred dollars for a week's work. But the week was gone, and by four o'clock of any hard day now Benson's body reminded him that the weeks to come were not unlimited. His anger, however, was not weary; it had been refueled by the Duke.

That august man had stopped on his endless rounds of the job, chatted

briefly with Cantrell, and then walked over the tracks until he was just below them.

'On top!'

'Sir?' Benson had snarled at Braithewaite's respect.

'Going to finish this beam to-day?'

'Just about, if it goes all right.'

'If you can't get it all, skip Track Three and get those holes over Track Four first. I want that done so the night train can work on Four to-night.'

'Yes, sir. We'll get it for you.'

'Remember, when you go over there, that signal circuit next to Four is hot. You'll have to get pretty close to it, but you'd better both stay on the cold side of the drill.'

This time Benson's snarl was audible. Of course the signal circuit was hot — any lineman knew that.

'All right, sir. We'll keep out of it good.'

It made Benson sick to hear men nursed like that. He could remember when . . . Braithewaite kicked him sharply. The Duke was shouting: —

'Wake up, Benson! I'm talking to you!'

'Well?'

'Do you understand those signal wires are hot?'

'Hell, yes.'

'Well, keep your mind on your business and see to it you keep clear of them!'

It was too much.

'What the hell did you think I was going to do — light my pipe on it?'

'I think you're going down the road talking to yourself the next time I have to arc at you, Benson. Want it to be now?'

He thought of throwing something, but he knew he could n't hit the Duke, and even if he did, there would be Braithewaite and the rest of them. No. He'd wait and get him alone.

'All right. I'll keep out of it.'



The Duke had walked off without further word. Braithewaite looked at Benson curiously.

'Dern if you ain't a sight, Benson. A body'd think the Duke had been rawhiding you instead of trying to keep you from committing suicide.'

'I'll commit —'

Something in the level perplexity of Braithewaite's stare warned him. He'd been talking too much that afternoon. Part of the hot confusion in his mind coalesced slowly into a vague stratagem. He twisted the mouth that wanted to bite into a grin.

'I guess you're right at that, kid. Always makes me kind of hot to have the Man arc at me, though. Forget it.'

Braithewaite's face relaxed. 'He does n't mean nothin' by it 'cept for us to stay alive, and I don't never mind no man astin' me to do that.'

He looked at his watch. 'Looks to me like we better skip Three and do that pair over there by the signal circuit right off. If we was to bust a bit or suthin' we'd need all the time we got to finish up like the Duke wants us to.'

It gave him a chance to regain his composure, and, without wording the need, he knew that composure was what he must have. Yes, he would act just like he'd forgotten all about the words with the Duke. If he saw the general foreman again to-day he'd speak to him civilly. For all his acid impatience, the Duke was notoriously forgiving. Then the Duke and everyone else would think their little tiff was all over. And then to-morrow . . . he closed his hand hard on the pliers.

## VII

The setup, he now saw, would be tricky. If they drilled as usual from the opposite sides of the drill, one man would have a narrow clearance —

probably less than fifteen inches. And that hot signal wire would be just behind him where he could n't see it. If he forgot and leaned or reached back, it would just be flowers. It would be smart to work it as the Duke had ordered.

He estimated it thoughtfully. Hot, yes. But it was possible. He'd worked 'em closer than that. And it would be a fitting gesture to spend his last working day for the Duke in disobedience. If he had time he might even taunt the Duke with it to-morrow before . . . He crushed his plier handles. And then he nodded and, turning easily, walked the narrow beam back to Braithewaite.

'Gimme my end of it, kid, and then when we get over there you can hold it and I'll lash my end first.'

Together they silhouetted slowly across the beam, moving now with a uniformity of step and balance that made them seem component parts of a single figure joined by the heavy burden of the ladder. Not until Braithewaite had assumed the whole of this burden, while Benson slipped down astride the beam preparatory to lashing it, did the boy realize his partner's intent. Benson saw him gasp.

'You better pick them feet up onto the beam and then slide this way a bit, Benson. You come within a foot of backin' your heels into that signal wire when you set down.'

He admired the boy's self-control. Some men would have screamed. The signal circuit was n't as hot as the fourteen-thousand-volt track circuits, but no man had ever touched it twice. Benson let no admiration into his voice, however.

'Why don't you go tell Mussolini how to boss Wops? Don't you think I know what I'm doing?'

'If you do, you're crazy. That's 7700 behind you!'

'It's still *behind* me, ain't it? What

do you want me to do — stand in a rubber tree somewhere and work it from there?'

'Get far enough away from that stuff so if you do forget yourself you won't reach back into it. You can't drill safe there.'

'We can't drill at all without you give me that ladder. What do you care if I do back into it? I'll be the one it burns up. It can't hurt you where you'll be.'

'I know it can't. But they ain't no need for it to hurt neither of us. Get up and let's rig it like the Duke said.'

'To hell with the Duke!'

'Cantrell'd fire you if he seen you fixin' to work that close to something hot.'

'Cantrell's down the track a mile, figurin' out to-morrow's work.'

'He may get back before we get it drilled.'

'If you don't give me the end of that ladder, we ain't even going to have time to get it drilled.' He played his trump card cunningly. 'It'll look good for you to have to tell the Duke you could n't finish his drilling 'cause you was so busy telling a lineman twice your age how to rig, won't it?'

Braithewaite handed him the ladder end without a word. Throughout the careful lashing Benson was nervous. It was a risky job. The wind was wetter — he could hear the lethal whine in the wire behind him. Once his hand slipped a trifle. He just barely remembered to stop the balancing swing of his foot. Sweat streamed from his face and he dared not look at Braithewaite. With an effort he steadied himself, and in the silence of his mind he began whispering over and over again: 'Hot behind me, hot behind me, hot behind me.'

The rhythm of the warning steadied him. He finished the lashing and, gulping hard, swung down onto the ladder. He had n't felt like this since

he was just beginning. The ladder rocked not at all. But, even with a heart full of gratitude, Benson could not voice his thanks for the herculean effort with which Braithewaite had steadied it. 'Hot behind me, hot behind me, hot behind me . . .'

He locked his teeth and forced himself to survey his new position. It was a fresh shock to see the green corrosion on the copper strands less than two feet behind his shoulders. For a second he thought of backing down — of slipping back up to the beam and safety while they readjusted their rig. That would relax the tensivity of Braithewaite's face and quiet the queer ringing inside himself. But as he hesitated some of his fright abated. He tried his throat silently and judged that his voice would not betray him.

'All right, kid. Let's set up that rack and I'll show you what kind of shavings a *man* makes.'

Braithewaite grinned nervously, but there was admiration in his young voice for all the callousness it affected.

'Well, if that *man* can make shavings like he slides around them kilowatts we won't be long here. But if he goes to forgettin' where he is he won't make nothin' but smoke and ashes from now on.'

Why did he suddenly think of the smoke bursting from Harry's shirt? Sweat poured from him. It was a full minute before he could resume the cadence of what had become his prayer: 'Hot behind me, hot behind me, hot behind me.' Slowly it steadied him.

Drilling steadied him, too. He felt better with the even pull of the ratchet restoring its rhythmic regularity to heart and respiration. He did n't reflect now on the panic through which he had passed, but only on the familiar resistance of the handle and the bite of the twirling bit. Slowly his chant of 'Hot behind me, hot behind me, hot

behind me,' blended and disappeared into the metrical clicking of the ratchet. And then, not until Braithewaite spelled him did he think of anything but the drilling.

Idle, he buttoned his collar again, keeping his elbows well in front of him. That was all there was to hot wire after all. It would n't come and get you if you did n't bother it. Maybe now Braithewaite would quit singing the blues and quoting the Duke about it.

Heat surged through him again as the Duke reëntered his thoughts, and he locked his left hand over a copper suspension strap to steady his shaking rage. ' . . . down the road talking to himself.' Yes, he'd go down the road, but it would n't be talking to himself. It would be laughing to himself at the way he would have seen the Duke crumple up. He could see it already, see it so clearly that unconsciously his hand closed over his pliers. He would

get drunk to-night and stay drunk. He would shave off his moustache, pack his other belt and his good suit and take them all with him in the car when he went to the yard in the morning. He'd take his tools home to-night and pack them too, all but his pliers. He'd have them in his pocket to-morrow. Unconsciously he eased them out of their scabbard. He'd go into the yard with the pliers in his pocket and he'd go straight for the Duke. No. He'd wait outside the office door till the Duke came out with his head in the blueprints the way he always did. Then he'd step up, tell him who he was, and curse him. He could see now the surprise and rage coming into the hard face that seemed to be just before him. His hand began to crush the plier handles. Yes. He'd curse him until the Duke swung at him. And then . . . his plier hand, following the fury of his thoughts, swung upward and back. . . .

# THE BANKING ACT OF 1935

BY GEORGE B. ROBERTS

THE proposals affecting the banking system embodied in the new bill before Congress, known as the Banking Act of 1935, are of so fundamental a nature as to make the bill the most important piece of banking legislation since the Federal Reserve Act. The bill is of vital importance to every banker because it concerns the soundness and liquidity of banking assets. It is of importance to every bank depositor for the same reason, and it is of importance to every man, woman, and child because it concerns the purchasing power of money.

The bill is divided into three parts — Title I, containing amendments to the Federal Deposit Insurance Law; Title II, containing vital and far-reaching amendments to the Federal Reserve Act; and Title III, containing various amendments to the Banking Act of 1933 designed to clarify and improve the present law. Bankers generally approve the provisions of Titles I and III in substance, but have grave misgivings as to Title II in its present form. It is not the purpose of this article to deal with all three sections of the bill, but to urge the elimination from the bill of Title II, dealing with the Federal Reserve System. In so doing, the intention is not to oppose any and all changes in our central banking organization, but to stress the desirability of adequate study before legislating on so controversial and difficult a problem.

It is agreed that a thoroughgoing, scientific review of the entire field of banking and currency is badly needed. More than twenty years have passed since the Federal Reserve System was established. During this period the System has undergone constant alteration, partly as a result of internal administrative changes within the legal framework of the Act, and partly as a result of amendments made from time to time to the Federal Reserve law itself. In the important matter of credit policy, there has been a gradual departure from the ideas of the framers of the original Federal Reserve Act, who believed that the main business of a central bank was to hold the ultimate banking reserves of the country and to furnish business with an elastic currency, determining its rediscount rate in accordance with the status of the reserves entrusted to its care.

As time has passed, there has been a growing tendency on the part of the Reserve Banks to depart from this traditional attitude, and to attempt by means of credit policy to exert a conscious control over business and prices. Along with the growth of this control idea there has come, particularly in the recent years of emergency, an increased influence from Washington which has marked a further departure from the early conceptions of the Federal Reserve Act. And finally, in addition to these changes within the law there have been numerous amendments to the law

itself which have vitally affected the whole Federal Reserve and banking structure.

While these changes have been going on in the Federal Reserve System, our currency laws also have been radically altered by the monetary legislation of recent years, including the revaluation of the dollar and the Silver Purchase Act. As a result of these changes in the Federal Reserve and in the currency base, our banking and money system has gone a long way from the well-ordered setup of 1914. It has become more or less of a legislative patchwork, pieced together at different periods, often under emergency conditions, without scientific basis, confusing to the business man, and almost certain to be a prolific source of trouble in the future.

There can be no question, therefore, as to the shortcomings of the existing system — if it can be called a system — and of the need for reform.

#### *What the Bill Proposes*

Just what are the reforms proposed in Title II that make this bill so outstandingly important? Briefly they may be summarized as follows: —

1. Giving more power over the Reserve Banks to the Federal Reserve Board and to the President.

2. Broadening the eligibility requirements for paper submitted to Reserve Banks for rediscount and as collateral deposited as security for notes.

3. Extending the powers of member banks to make real estate loans.

The purpose will be to discuss these three proposals in order, taking up first the matter of Federal Reserve organization and the central management of credit. This centralization of control is to be accomplished by: —

- (a) Giving the President power to ask for the resignation of the Governor of the

Reserve Board, instead of having him appointed for twelve years, as at present.

- (b) Broadening the powers of the Reserve Board to raise or lower reserve requirements.

- (c) Combining the office of Governor and Chairman of the Board of Reserve Banks, and requiring the election of Governor to be approved annually by the Reserve Board.

- (d) Providing that the open market committee, which controls Reserve Bank purchases and sales of government securities, — in other words, the power to inflate or deflate, — shall be composed of the Governor and two other members of the Reserve Board, and two Governors of Reserve Banks elected by Reserve Banks, and making the decisions of this committee binding on all Reserve Banks.

#### *The Central Control of Credit*

It is apparent that this bill reflects the school of thought which believes that the banking system requires some kind of overhead control, apart from the ordinary supervisory functions connected with examinations, opening of new banks, and so forth, and that this overhead control should be responsible for regulating the aggregate amount of credit outstanding at any given time. This opinion is opposed by others who believe that the credit system will be managed best if left to the free play of natural economic forces. Those who adhere to this view stress the manner in which the credit system functioned before central banks tried to manage things by means of open market operations. When business expanded, the demand for bank credit increased. This led, in turn, to increased rediscounting with the central bank, often at a time when the latter was losing gold in consequence of rising prices and an adverse balance of international payments. The result was an advance in interest and discount rates. This acted as a natural corrective in the situation, checked the tendencies toward inflation, induced borrowers to liquidate,



and recalled capital from abroad. As borrowers paid off their loans and gold flowed in from foreign countries, expanding the credit base, interest rates fell automatically, deflation was halted, and business was encouraged once more to go ahead.

The theory that central banks, by making money cheap or dear, should take the initiative in controlling business and prices has gained many adherents, both in this country and abroad. Yet it cannot be said that the conscious control of credit has made an impressive record in recent years. Open market operations have been used more often to prevent needed readjustments in the economic system than to facilitate them. As we look back to 1927, it is easy to see now that the cheap money programme of the United States in that year had that effect. At that time the United States was on the point of receiving large imports of gold from Europe. It was recognized that this gold was unneeded, and even a source of danger, as our stocks were already excessively large; moreover, it was feared that a gold movement of large proportions would endanger the newly reconstituted gold standards of Europe. It was with the purpose, therefore, of warding off this movement that our cheap money policy was adopted. The result, however, was to lay the basis for inflation here, while at the same time sparing European countries, particularly Great Britain, from the necessity of making readjustments in currency values and internal costs that would have restored the equilibrium in international payments. In other words, had it not been for the well-intentioned efforts of the central banks to 'manage' the situation, gold movements might have forced readjustments at that time which would have cost the world far less than the price paid ultimately for the attempt to bolster up artificial and unsound conditions.

### *Criticism of the Federal Reserve Banks*

The proponents of the idea of the conscious control of credit criticize the present structure of the Federal Reserve System, with its division of authority between the Federal Reserve Banks and the Federal Reserve Board, as cumbersome and unwieldy. They contend that the failure to centralize responsibility was one reason for the failure of the System to promote business stability.

It will be admitted readily that the regional system of central banking, with its emphasis upon local needs, and its divided authority, is not ideally suited to the type of monetary management contemplated under this bill. Such a system has the faults and inefficiencies inherent in all democracies. There is no doubt as to the superior efficiency of dictatorship, provided always that the dictatorial powers are used wisely. Can it be taken for granted that they will be used wisely?

The assumption that the banking system in this country broke down because of too much laissez-faire and insufficient central control will, as has been shown, hardly bear analysis in the light of events over the past ten years. However much the policy may have appeared justified at the time, it was an attempt at management, and not laissez-faire, which was responsible for the cheap money programme of 1927 that many economists believe promoted the boom which ended in the fatal collapse. Moreover, it is interesting to recall, in view of the proposals to increase the powers of the Federal Reserve Board, that it was a regional Reserve Bank — the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago — which held out in 1927 against the policy of reducing rediscount rates, and that it was the Board which forced that bank to fall in line with this policy against its wishes. Again, it was the Federal Reserve Bank of New York

which early in 1929 voted again and again to raise the rediscount rate in an effort to check the wild speculation in the stock market, while it was the Board which again and again vetoed these requests for fear of the political consequences of an adverse effect upon business.

If any conclusion is to be drawn from the experience of recent years, it would appear to be that the System has suffered from too much central management rather than from too little. To judge from a strict interpretation of the record, it would look as though open market operations, instead of being handed over to the Reserve Board, ought to be abolished altogether.

#### *Quantitative vs. Qualitative Standards of Credit*

In the present-day discussion of monetary problems, there will be observed a tendency to stress the importance of quantitative, as distinguished from qualitative, changes in credit. The emphasis is on the aggregate amount of credit that can be got outstanding, rather than upon the uses to which this credit is put.

This will be noted not only in connection with the arguments made on behalf of enlarging the powers of the Reserve Board, but also in the constant pressure on the member banks to lend more freely and get more credit into circulation. In contrast with this newer theory, orthodox monetary doctrine has always taught that the important thing is to see to it that bank assets are of the right kind,—that is, self-liquidating commercial paper arising out of bona fide business transactions,—and that, if these principles of the granting of credit are adhered to, the matter of what total amount of credit ought to be outstanding will take care of itself.

The Federal Reserve Act was drawn by men who believed in the qualitative rather than the quantitative test of credit. As Professor Harold L. Reed, of Cornell University, has recently pointed out, almost every important feature of the act of 1913 expresses allegiance to this principle. The division of the Reserve System into twelve districts, the powers conferred on the regional Reserve Bank officers, the standard of eligibility set for paper submitted for rediscount, all reflect plainly the intentions of the founders to set up a system primarily for the *accommodation of commerce and trade*. In the original Federal Reserve Act not even United States Government securities were admitted as a basis for Reserve Bank credit. It is perfectly clear that there was never any intention of having the Reserve Banks assume responsibility for *regulating* the fluctuations of business.

#### *Power of Central Bank to Influence Business Limited*

Moreover, it will be granted by all but the most extreme advocates of managed credit that the power of the central bank to influence business is limited. The central bank can flood the money market with funds to the point of surfeit without assurance that the funds will actually be used by industry and commerce. Trying to force credit into employment has been likened to pushing at one end of a piece of string. Someone must take up the slack at the other end.

The central bank has no way of accomplishing this. It does not deal directly with the public. It affects money conditions through its discount rate and by buying and selling securities in the market. If the reserves of member banks are increased, the ability of these banks to lend will be correspondingly enlarged; but whether the loans will actually be made will depend

upon factors beyond the central bank's control, such, for example, as the lending policies of the member banks and the desire of business men to borrow.

It is true that a central bank can bring on contraction of credit with a considerable degree of success, by means of a high discount rate and by open market operations designed to reduce the reserves of the member banks. All experience indicates, however, that the promotion of expansion is quite another matter. We have had ample reason to know that low money rates and high bank reserves are not all that is needed to get business men to borrow. In the last analysis, this will depend upon the opportunities available for using money profitably. This, in turn, is a matter of the general state of equilibrium existent throughout the economic system. The danger in these efforts to stimulate business by pumping out vast quantities of credit is in the groundwork laid for later inflation, the tendency toward the deterioration of credit standards, and the diversion of attention from the true causes of maladjustment.

#### *Independence of Controlling Authority Essential*

It is evident, however, that the trend everywhere is toward further attempted management of credit and currencies. However much opinions may differ as to the wisdom of this trend, all must agree as to the importance of securing men of proper capacity, experience, and independence of judgment to exercise these vast powers. Especially is it important that this body should be as free as possible from the influence of the political government.

Government, in the very nature of the case, is disqualified for regulating the banking relations with the public. This is regardless of the goodness of its intentions. The political organization is too susceptible to public opinion. It

is bound to be so. This is inherent in democracy. Often it becomes essential for central banks to do unpopular things in order to maintain sound credit conditions, such as put on the brakes when business and credit are beginning to show signs of overexpansion. With a central bank tied in and identified with a political party, what chance would there be of its doing so? Governments are more likely to be interested in staying in office than they are in maintaining sound credit conditions.

Moreover, the independence of the central bank and the State is peculiarly important at a time when the government is appearing as the largest borrower in the market. When the government dominates the central bank it is in a position to make the market for its own securities, thus preventing any true test of the soundness of its credit and removing all restraint upon continuous borrowing save only that which the government will be willing to impose upon itself. History has shown repeatedly the dangers of too close an association of central bank and Treasury.

The question, therefore, which the individual will want to ask himself about Title II is to what extent are its provisions likely to promote a capable and independent control of credit? Undoubtedly the proposal to raise the salaries of members of the Reserve Board to equal those of Cabinet officers (\$15,000), with adequate retirement pay, deserves endorsement, as tending to enhance the dignity of a position on the Board and as affording inducements likely to attract capable men. The proposal, on the other hand, to have the Governor of the Reserve Board serve only at the discretion of the President is open to serious objection. If the President can force the resignation of the Governor at will, what likelihood is there of securing fearless and independent administration of that office,

or of attracting men of high calibre to it?

Similarly, the proposal to make the tenure of office of Governors of the Reserve Banks subject to annual approval by the Reserve Board would tend to suppress all independence of view within the Reserve System and lead to mediocre appointments. If the new setup of the open market committee is to have any meaning at all, the two Governors of Federal Reserve Banks who, together with the Governor and two other members of the Reserve Board, compose this committee must be independent agents. They must not be mere creatures of the Board. Clearly these provisions relating to appointment and terms of Governor of the Board and of Governors of Reserve Banks should be eliminated from the bill, or at least substantially modified. The Federal Reserve System cannot be permitted to become the tool of the political party in power if it is to command the confidence of the country.

#### *The Change of Eligibility Requirements*

Aside from the question of the control of credit, Title II deals with changes in eligibility requirements for paper submitted for rediscount and as collateral for Federal Reserve notes. Originally, the Federal Reserve Act was based on the theory that Federal Reserve credit should be founded on short-term, self-liquidating paper rediscounted for the purpose of accommodating industry, commerce, and agriculture. The first great departure from this principle occurred during the war. At that time, member bank notes secured by United States Government securities were made eligible for rediscount and as backing for currency. Later, under emergency legislation of 1932 and 1933, the eligibility requirements were further broadened to permit Reserve Banks, under exceptional cir-

cumstances, to make loans to member banks which had exhausted their supplies of eligible paper, taking as security any collateral considered satisfactory; also, the eligibility requirements with respect to collateral for Federal Reserve notes were extended to include United States Government securities purchased in the open market (together always, of course, with at least 40 per cent of gold).

What the new bill proposes to do is, in effect, to make permanent the more liberal eligibility requirements contained in the recent emergency legislation. Reserve Banks would be enabled to lend to member banks on the security of any 'sound' asset, 'subject to such regulations as to maturities and other matters as the Federal Reserve Board may prescribe.' Federal Reserve notes would be backed by a minimum of 40 per cent of gold certificates, plus a first lien on all the assets of the Reserve Bank issuing such notes.

The question is, are these proposals sound? This answer is by no means simple. On the one hand, we have the traditional principle of central banking that central bank credit should be based on short-term, self-liquidating paper. This principle is a good one for several reasons.

#### *Arguments against Changing Eligibility Requirements*

First, it tends to keep the volume of central bank credit in step with the strictly commercial requirements of the country. If long-term assets are admitted to the central bank, funds are more likely to be diverted to capital uses and to speculation. It is not the function of the central bank to finance capital requirements or speculation.

Second, it provides as the basis of central bank credit a revolving fund of assets which, by virtue of near maturities, are being constantly tested for quality. In the case of long-term

assets there may be no such testing for many years to come.

Third, it assures the central bank a portfolio of short maturities by means of which the bank can rapidly adjust its position by permitting these assets to mature without replacement. If the bank holds long-term assets it can adjust its position only by selling them and the market may not be prepared to receive them. In the case of certain types of assets, say real estate mortgages, political pressure might be such as to interfere with their sale.

Abroad, it is true that many central banks will discount other than short-term trade paper, but they do so almost invariably at a higher rate, and usually they carefully supervise the use of the funds. In other words, this type of advance is looked upon askance. In the case of the Bank of England, there are no legal restrictions on the Bank's investments; nevertheless, only in times of severest crisis does the Bank depart from prime bills, or government or certain of the best grade of colonial and municipal securities. The British joint stock banks rarely if ever borrow directly from the Bank of England. When they want funds they sell bills to the discount market, and then the market borrows, if it has to, at the Bank. The latter's advances, therefore, are on the prime bills. It is inconceivable that the Bank would make a practice of admitting general bank assets as freely as Title II appears to contemplate.

#### *Arguments for Changing Eligibility Requirements*

On the other hand, against these objections to the liberalization of eligibility requirements is the great decrease in recent years in the volume of commercial paper of the self-liquidating type. This trend was in progress before the depression, and was due to a variety of causes, including need for less work-

ing capital as a result of speedier processes in industry and transportation and changed methods of corporate financing. As a result of this tendency, together with the great pressure to lend, following on gold imports and easy money policies, bank funds have tended to flow more and more into capital loans and investments. While it is impossible to obtain precise figures, it is doubtful whether there are at the present time more than \$5,000,000,000 or \$6,000,000,000 of the old-type self-liquidating commercial loans in the whole banking system. The question is pertinent as to whether we have a commercial banking system any more.

Obviously, a condition of this kind raises serious questions as to future banking policies. It is possible, of course, that old-time commercial paper may sometime come to life again. No doubt a revival of business would lead to some increase, and the closer supervision of corporate long-term financing may also have this effect. Ought eligibility requirements to be such as to promote a development of this kind by continuing to give preference to short-term paper, or ought they to be revised on the assumption that a permanent change in financing methods has taken place?

There is much complaint that the present eligibility requirements are unduly restricting bank credit on the ground that banks are reluctant to make loans which they could not pass on to the Reserve Banks in an emergency. Is it desirable to try to remedy this situation by attempting to give liquidity to paper not fundamentally liquid by making it rediscountable at the Reserve Banks? Is this not merely passing the illiquidity on to the Reserve Banks? And are there not widespread dangers in such a policy — danger to the central bank of being involved in frozen paper, and danger to all banks in the encouragement given to the



expansion of illiquid loans? May the solution not possibly lie in adjustments of a different character in the banking system? One suggestion has been that possibly a plan might be worked out for adjusting banking liabilities more in accordance with the nature and maturity of the assets, perhaps by the issue of debentures or certificates of deposits.

The point is that the subject is far too complicated and involved for a hasty judgment. The need is for careful study by the best-qualified experts. Time is not pressing. Banks have large supplies of eligible paper in the shape of government securities, and the huge excess reserves make the likelihood of rediscounting of any kind remote.

#### *The Question of Real Estate Loans*

This question is part and parcel of the same problem involved in the proposal to change eligibility requirements. To what extent should bank liabilities, which are in a large degree demand liabilities, be backed by long-term paper?

On behalf of the amendment, it is argued that, except in the Northeastern States, the mutual savings bank is practically unknown, and that the savings of the people, to a large extent, are kept in the commercial banks; that it is as sound to lend savings money in commercial banks on real estate as it is to lend savings money in savings banks on such security; and that, unless this is done, real estate in most sections of the country will be denied credit facilities to which it is entitled.

The objection to this argument is that commercial banks, in actual practice, are forced to regard their savings deposits as payable on demand; that any attempt to enforce the thirty-day payment clause in time of emergency would precipitate a run by

the commercial depositors, thus gutting the bank at the expense of the savings depositors.

Various suggestions have been made for modifying this section of the bill, including the proposal for segregation of savings and commercial deposits in banks, also the proposal that the conditions on which real estate loans may be granted by member banks be left to the discretion of the Federal Reserve Board. It seems evident that the subject needs further study, embracing the whole field of mortgage financing — what the needs are, existing agencies for supplying them, and in general the problem of establishing this form of credit on a sounder basis.

#### *Scientific Study of Banking Reform Essential*

All of this emphasizes the need for a careful and scientific study of the whole question of banking reform. What the situation requires is not more hurriedly enacted legislation, rushed through Congress without adequate opportunity for study and debate, but a carefully evolved programme in the preparation of which Congress should have the advice of the best-qualified minds in the country. No emergency demands immediate action, and, should one arise, the government already has ample powers for dealing with almost any conceivable situation.

With the multitude of problems pressing upon Congress, it must be realized that that body cannot possibly devote to Title II the attention that is essential to the task of reorganizing the banking system. Clearly, the subject is one which should be referred to an expert and impartial committee, which should explore all possibilities and report to Congress for action as the latter sees fit.

# GLORY

BY EMILY DICKINSON

My triumph lasted till the drums  
Had left the Dead alone,  
And then I dropped my victory  
And, chastened, stole along

To where the finished faces  
Conclusion turned on me —  
And then I hated glory  
And wished myself were They!

What is to be — is best descried  
When it has also been, —  
Could Prospect taste of Retrospect  
The tyrannies of men

Were tenderer, diviner  
The Transitive toward.  
A bayonet's contrition  
Is nothing to the Dead!

# A BED IN THE MUSEUM

BY DALLAS LORE SHARP

J. W. P. JENKS, who got the turtle eggs for Agassiz,<sup>1</sup> was one of my college professors. I shared his room in the museum for three years of my college course — until the day of his death. No, you perhaps have never shared a naturalist's room — not the old-fashioned sort of naturalist, anyway, who went up and down the world with his traps and gun, collecting and skinning and mounting his specimens; who was quite as much of an explorer and discoverer as he was a collector.

Perhaps you would not have wished to share his room — but I shall come to that in a minute. First let me tell how it chanced that I did share that room, for all this goes back some three or four years previous to my going to college.

I was seventeen years old and was attending the South Jersey Institute, a preparatory school in my home town, when Dr. Trask, the principal, returning from a trip to New England, told us that a great museum of mounted birds and animals, shells, and alcoholic specimens had been given to the Institute by a Professor Jenks, an old naturalist, who had collected them when principal of Pierce Academy in Middleboro, Massachusetts. The academy had been closed for years, and the collection was now on its way to the Institute.

Probably that would not have ex-

cited you at all; but it did me. A two-headed kitten and a horned toad had constituted the whole of the Institute's museum up to that time, with the exception of some fossil specimens that another boy and I had gathered from the sandstone quarries and marl pits — gathered and toted, fifty pounds of them at a time, on our backs for seven miles over the road!

This news of the coming museum was highly exciting. Greek and Latin had a hard time of it and my algebra actually suffered. But then, my mathematics always has suffered. My life has always been too exciting for mathematics. Then one day, just before the big cases began to arrive, Dr. Trask called me into his office and handed me a book, a zoölogy, written by this naturalist and professor who was sending us the collection, saying as he did so: —

'Professor Jenks is coming down to see us as soon as we get the specimens unpacked. I want you to go to work on the birds and meet him when he comes down.'

That is how it began. I had taken some self-conducted lessons in taxidermy before this, and knew a great deal more about birds than I did about some other things that a boy of seventeen might be expected to know. So I went to work after school hours upon the birds, and it was while this was going on that the old naturalist, profes-

<sup>1</sup>See 'Turtle Eggs for Agassiz,' in the *Atlantic* for February 1910. — EDITOR

sor, author, museum-maker, — wonder-worker! — came to see how it fared with his birds and beasts.

I had never seen the like of this man. I had read about such men — Linnæus, White of Selborne, Agassiz, Audubon. I knew the life of Audubon by heart. There was a picture of him in the *Life* I had read when I was about fourteen, and I had my mother cut my shirts low in the neck with wide, rolling collars — just like his; and I had tried to let my hair grow long on my shoulders — just like his. Mother got on very well with the collars; but I had a terrible time with the hair. It grew *up* my neck and stuck out straight from my rolling collar like Horace Greeley's whiskers!

That, to be sure, did not lessen my admiration for Audubon, or deaden my interest in naturalists and natural history. And here, at last, was a real naturalist — the man who had been the first to explore Lake Okeechobee, who had been bitten by centipedes, who had written a book, who had collected turtle eggs for Agassiz, and who had been so nearly paralyzed by arsenic, absorbed in his mounting of skins, that he walked with a sort of quick scuff and shuffle!

If anything of the heroic was lacking in his appearance, it was more than made up by that shuffle caused by arsenical poisoning. Arsenic in his very bones! A martyr to science!

He arrived at the Institute, and we had been working together for some time that morning when the old man suddenly exclaimed: —

'You ought to have a lesson in skinning and mounting! Run out into the grove and get me a bird!'

Eager feet brought me quickly back, cuckoo in hand, remarking, expectant of approval: —

'This is the only bad bird I could find.'

'No, no,' Professor Jenks protested,

'not a bad bird, but a very useful one, and I shall prove it when I open the gizzard and show you how stuck full it is of caterpillar hairs.'

Meanwhile his deft fingers removed the skin, cut open the body, and took out the gizzard, turned it inside out, and showed me the lining stuffed with thousands of caterpillar hairs.

Only a wizard could have foretold that mystery, only X-ray eyes have seen through that body wall and beheld the plush-like coating of woolly-bear caterpillar hairs. So that is what it is to be a naturalist, a scientist — to know the cuckoo's languid shape, its dreamy call, and the bird's very place in the scheme of creation! Wisdom, indeed, hidden from ordinary mortals!

The caution that came with that lesson has stayed by me to this day. Those hairs in the gizzard of my 'bad' cuckoo still stick into *me*. They almost spoiled my lesson in taxidermy, but not quite, for as, out of the mass of crumpled feathers, the long, loose-hung bird shook himself into shape, then hopped in a characteristic pose, with eye cocked aloft for a worm, I was lost in admiration.

When the lesson was done — I had many another later — he turned and, as suddenly as before, asked: —

'Are you going to college?'

Certainly I was, though up to that instant I had scarcely known it, for it is quite impossible to explain how far-away and unreal a place 'college' had been to my thoughts and opportunity. But then and there I was as sure of going to college as I am now sure that I have been to college.

'Well,' said the old naturalist, 'when you get ready to come, let me know.'

And when I got ready to come, I did let him know. I was out of my teens before I could write him that I was ready. But he had not forgotten, and back came his prompt reply on a postal card: —

'Come! You can share my room with me.'

How would you feel? What would you do if a great naturalist should tell you to come to college and share his room in the museum with him? And if he should tell you all that on a postal card? Could you believe it? No! Instead of believing it, you would grip that postal card in your hand, and go out alone into the fields, and along your old wood roads, and try to believe that you were you, and that the big solid earth still lay beneath your feet, and that you moved on feet and not on wings. You would hold your breath, open your hand, and, with all the courage of your soul, you would dare to read that postal again. Then you would whoop like a wild Indian, and bolt away through the bushes until you stopped short somewhere, anywhere, to read that postal again.

It has been many years since that postal came, but the thrill it gave me I feel yet. That was one of the great invitations of my life. And I accepted it.

College was to open three days later. But I was ready. Why should I not be? I had nothing to take but myself — not even money. Money is not a very necessary thing to start college on when you have youth and health — and the offer of an old naturalist who is to share his room with you! But I went to one of my friends, borrowed twenty-five dollars, lent ten of it to another friend on my way to the station, and landed in Providence, Rhode Island, in time for the opening exercises at Brown University with eight dollars and fifty cents in my pocket!

Plenty! Anybody can begin college on eight dollars and fifty cents — unless he is past twenty-one. I have known many a college student since to begin on less than eight dollars and finish his course in four years, fresh, glad, and strong.

I would do it again. I should like

the chance — were the old naturalist and his room to be mine again. And such a room!

'Come in,' he called in answer to my knock that September morning. 'I'm ready for you' — taking my hand. 'We'll keep house together here. That lower shelf is for your books. You can have the stool and this sink shelf for a table. Your clothes can go into the specimen case outside!' — and his eyes twinkled through his glasses with humor and the joy of being a boy again.

But the room I was to share! It was the old naturalist's workshop, about eight feet wide by fourteen feet long, built, like a big packing box, right in the middle of the main museum hall, with a door at one end and a sink and a window at the other.

Besides the sink, window, and door, it was furnished with a bookcase, a chair and a stool, a small table, a workbench in front of the window, a one-burner gas stove, skins, bones, bottles, and walls hung with tools, and a pine board six feet long by two feet wide on brackets against the wall for a bed.

Aladdin and his lamp! Such things, as I say, had happened before — in books I had read. But where were my lamp and genie that such wildest wishes should thus come true to me?

I seized a pair of long stuffers — used in mounting geese and cranes — and pinched myself. The old naturalist watched with beaming face.

'Think it will do?' he asked, taking in the whole room with a rested, happy look.

'Do!' I exclaimed. 'Am I really to have half of all this for four years?'

'Half of it all except the bed. I think perhaps you'll need all of that,' he said, running his eye along the narrow shelf, but seeing me with the same eye, I am now sure.

I looked at the pine board, too. It was exactly six feet long, and exactly



twenty-four inches wide. Then I looked at the old naturalist. He was about twenty-four inches through any way you might put the calipers on him. That twenty-four-inch shelf would not hold both of us at the same time by the closest figuring.

'Could n't we find another board,' I ventured, 'to go against the opposite wall?'

Perhaps he had not been watching me with anxiety, but at my reply his face broke into an all-over smile, which I came to know later was very rare, and he answered heartily: —

'No, no. I have n't slept on that shelf now for some time. My children insist upon my sleeping somewhere else than alone here in the empty museum. But you'll enjoy it.'

Did I ever enjoy sounder, sweeter sleep? Sound sleep is a matter of bones, not beds, a matter quite as much of contentment as of covers.

The walls of my chamber were crowded with tools, wires, and the thousand other things of the taxidermist and curator. Skins, skeletons, shells, and alcoholic specimens were on the table, a tassel of tiny rattlesnake tails dangled just above my pillow, while outside my door, in the echoing room of the great museum, hung the articulated skeleton of a human being.

No, that grim presence never disturbed my dreams; neither did the big, spotted panther, crouching in the case next to the skeleton, disturb them. Yet sometimes at night, coming back alone to my room, with the dim moonlight falling through the windowed roof upon the crouching cat and swinging bones, I would quicken my steps and close my door — securely.

But not often, for not often had I any business to be out of my room at night. Here I lived and studied and worked afternoons and evenings with the old naturalist. I would get us a simple lunch over the small gas stove

by the sink, and then at night he and I would go out for dinner together, especially when there was a job to finish, some bird or beast to mount, and, returning, we would work and talk the evening away.

And here, as we worked, the old naturalist would talk — wiring the delicate bones of some small skeleton together, or flipping the feathers of some bird into shape, while his stories of turtle eggs and panthers and snakes and alligators, of men and of the ends of the earth, went on.

He was a museum-maker. During the latter half of the last century he had ransacked every wild corner of this continent, bringing back a museumful of skins and mounted specimens, but more stories than specimens. Stories, the more's the pity, were not in his line. No museum has had a section, or even a glass case, for stories. Life was adventure to him and he simply took the adventure for granted. It was the birds and the animals he was after, not how he got them, nor what he went through to get them.

He was a teacher, not a story-teller, and seldom spoke in a reminiscent vein. He was not without imagination, and had really a great narrative gift, but as he never counted the cost to himself of his expeditions, either of effort, of time, of money, or of danger, so he could see no human value to others in his adventures, and seldom could be led to talk about himself.

Three of my stories are of his telling: 'The Panther in the Pulpit,' 'The Gator Hole,' and 'The Whirl of the Rattlers.' A fourth, 'Turtle Eggs for Agassiz,' published in the *Atlantic*, is also his. They are not as he told them, for I was not wise enough, then and there, to write them down. And so, if I have put words into his mouth that he never uttered, it is only to give form to the story whose substance or suggestion came largely from him.

# A TALE OF THREE CITIES

BY GLANVILLE SMITH

## I

THE *Lady Shore*, not much more than a hundred years ago, set sail from England laden with supplies for the new convict colony at Botany Bay. I am glad I was not aboard. If I had been I should now be dead, instead of writing an essay in the serene privacy of a *Mariposa* stateroom, with a basket of cherries at my side fetched by a thoughtful steward. Nor should I have seen Australia, as I now have had the better fortune to do; rather, I should have been involved in a mutiny so scandalous that I cannot resist telling you something about it, in a veiled and hinty way. Let those of my readers who are movie scenarists here open their notebooks and poise their pens.

The *Lady Shore* carried not only cargo, but a contingent of women convicts. Also aboard was a detachment of recruits for the New South Wales Corps. Now the men convicts in those days were a mixed lot. Some were villains, others were martyrs to a too severe penal code. But out of deference to her sex no woman was transported, as a rule, unless she was a hussy of the deepest dye. She and her sisters on shipboard, however, called themselves ladies, and kept up the figment of respectability so far as looks went, plaiting straw bonnets, and putting the religious tracts distributed among them to good use as curl papers. As for the recruits on the *Lady Shore*, they were typical New South Wales Corps mate-

rial. It had been found impossible to police the convicts of the colony with British regulars, who thought such an employment beneath military dignity. Thus a special corps was formed, into which were swept regulars who had been disgraced in their own regiments (this eased the overcrowding in English military prisons), and recruited 'stay-makers, man-milliners, tobacco-nists and pedlars, that were called captains and lieutenants.' Such was the passenger list of the *Lady Shore*.

Plaiting straw bonnets was an amusement that soon lost its thrill. The ladies' minds turned to other things. When I say that social irregularities on convict ships were so usual as more fitly to be called regularities I tell no secret. A surgeon in charge on one such transport, who had endeavored to end these regularities, was chased from one end of the deck to the other by the furious ladies. They brandished their scissors in his face, and threatened in language of eighteenth-century plainness to teach him how it felt to live the life of virtue enforced. The *Lady Shore's* surgeon was not so arbitrary. In fact, the ladies in his care were on terms of intimacy not only with the recruits but with the crew. Thus, when the recruits decided that they preferred not to go to Botany Bay after all, but rather to turn the voyage into a pleasure cruise, it was easy to enlist the support of the sailors: the

convict ladies, who likewise were in no hurry to get to Botany Bay, wheedled them into it.

It was a model mutiny. They murdered the captain, they murdered the mate, and those others who were unenthusiastic about the new régime were set adrift. Then with a whoop and hurrah the rum casks were broached, and away sailed the *Lady Shore* on as uproarious a cruise as ever enlivened the Great Deep.

Now the *Lady Shore* never got to Australia, but other ships of a like character did. Thus she illustrates well enough how that great continent was first colonized, though for me to say so is perhaps a little risky. Some Sydney scholar even now may be giving the staff at Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Library the mortifying privilege of helping him in his search for source material for *A Genealogical Inquiry into the Connection between Early Convict Immigration in Maryland and Present-Day Lynch Law in the Maritime Counties of That State*. This monumental work would serve very well to remind us that there was a time when, at £20 a head, the British Government made an annual profit of £40,000 selling convict labor to our colonial forefathers, and that there is some convict blood in our own veins.

Actually, however, the study of these long-discarded colonial policies leads to the beaming smile of optimism rather than the blush of shame. To find so robust and buxom a blossom as present-day Australia grown from so unlikely a root is very reassuring. Here is proof of the strongest kind that either the depraved elements of society can and do reform, or the good elements mixed with them dominate at last.

A hundred years ago Tasmania was condemned as 'that cage of unclean birds, that isthmus between earth and hell.' Yet Hobart to-day, its city, for all that black history, drowns in

rainbow-misty loveliness — the most charming colonial survival in all Australasia. Sydney's transformation has been no less remarkable. Where the little colony shivered and starved for want of the supplies on the *Lady Shore* now stands the hugely populous mart of one of earth's chief wool- and food-producing areas. The village of prisons and chain gangs has become a city unique in all the world in the abundance and freedom of its sport. But stranger and more hopeful still is the promise of Canberra, a city founded and making its first growth in our own times. If Hobart could achieve loveliness and Sydney greatness from beginnings thus sordid, what shall we not expect of the new capital of so miracle-working a people?

## II

Hobart will be insulted by my calling her a colonial survival. Cities are like ourselves: they prefer the lively reputation. And most certainly old Hobart is not without briskness. At the foot of even her dreamiest lanes the sailboats on the blue Derwent tilt at jaunty angles; it is to-day's own breeze that drives them scudding. But the city's colonial air is what gives it its special charm. Sydney is older, and equally full of gruesome or romantic stories; but Sydney's huge growth has crowded the history out of her streets, whereas Hobart has been so lucky as to retain that age-mellowed treasure. When Father Time manages to travel to the far end of earth's farthest road and so comes to Hobart, it really is too pretty a place to disturb. After pecking at it a little with his scythe, he rubs his thin belly with a thoughtful hand, then hangs up the scythe in the rose-choked wilderness of Trinity burying ground, and takes a nap.

Yet this pretty town was founded to

absorb those criminals too infamous to put up with at Botany Bay. The sunny brown stones of these pleasant buildings were laid one on the other to the tune of the 'cat,' with bitter jest and bitterer laughter. The plane trees of Salamanca Place, the fiery geraniums of Napoleon Street, have fed on blood that ran down from lacerated backs. Here, too, were those grotesque executions, arranged as a lark from Macquarie Harbor prisons: one convict would murder another there, with convict witnesses to the deed, for the fun it afforded him and his friends to be sent to Hobart for trial. It broke the monotony. Of course the wretch would be convicted. He did n't care. 'Good-bye, Bob! Good-bye, Bill!' he'd cry on the scaffold, kicking off his shoes to the witnesses who had procured his condemnation, and so be hanged; whereupon his friends, their picnic done, would be shipped back to the Harbor.

Hobart's old history, however, is not all black. It is a pattern of dark and gay. Ladies and gentlemen made the voyage around the Cape to take possession of the great estates the convicts were to work for them; to a land of bush fires and bushrangers, convict vice, and the phantom menace of resentful blackfellows, they brought blood horses, asparagus roots, fine wines, fine china, and fine manners. With the British tenacity of habit they re-created a Britain of the Regency in the wild new land; they could imagine life in no other terms. Thus the streets of Hobart have pleasanter ghosts in them than those of the convicts merely. Dandies bow gracefully, ladies curtsy, who might have stepped out of Jane Austen. There is a whisk of lace parasols, the dainty scuff of kidskin slippers. From the cobbles ghostly sparks are struck by 'chariot, landaulet, and britschka.' Or here rides Parson Knopwood on his white pony,

rather drunk, but every inch a gentleman.

The parson was the sporting kind. Born to a rich Suffolk inheritance, he gambled it away to the Prince Regent. The Regent, however, was no man to let the giver of so good and perfect a gift go naked. He made Knopwood the present of a chaplaincy in the navy. Thus when Governor Collins, who had fought at Bunker Hill, was commanded to found a colony in Tasmania, the young parson was sent along to look after its soul. He really did very well, and churchgoing during his long life took on a special interest thanks to the fact that during the sermon, looking out at the window, he might break off with some such exclamation as: 'Damn that pony of mine! He's loose again.'

When old St. David's was built, in the parson's time, the convict who set the stone ball atop the cupola celebrated the event by standing on his head on it: what impudence in a convict to be so spirited! One of the ladies, who could not resist looking through the lace of her parasol, was made positively dizzy. She complained to the authorities; the man was flogged.

Another story of old Hobart is the jolly one of the White Pheasant Inn. Now convicts were sent out in those days for very small offenses; a mediæval severity yet marked the code. The theft of anything worth more than a shilling was enough, or robbing an orchard, or selling firecrackers. With 'combinations or conspiracies to raise wages' the law was no less stern; if the old code were in force to-day, the Federation of Labor, entire, would be in the chain gangs. As for the proprietor of our inn, he was an ex-convict, who had served time for shooting a white pheasant on some nobleman's hunting preserve. 'But there's no such bird as a white pheasant in England,' he would say, chuckling, as he drew a mug of ale. He liked Hobart and was

glad a perjury-obtained conviction had brought him there.

In his inn bar was fought Hobart's most spectacular duel. Late one night a French naval officer, returning to his ship from a party on shore, stopped in for a nightcap and soon fell to arguing with an American whaler who was drinking with his cronies. It was an argument of some heat, and, to the delight of the onlookers, went so far that presently there was a challenge. What excitement! It was insisted that honor required an immediate satisfaction; the landlord's coaching pistol was fetched down from the wall, a wide-bore piece, which the seconds privately loaded with raspberry jam and paper wadding. Since there was but one weapon, it was necessary for the principals to draw lots for the first use of it. The whaler won.

There was a magnificent silence. The Frenchman, quivering with rage, threw off his cloak, so baring a shirt of flawless white; the whaler grimly took aim, and fired.

Bang!

Oh, what a massacre! The poor whaler, seeing his adversary apparently blown quite to pieces, fell flat backwards in a faint, while the Frenchman stared in horror at his red-splattered bosom, not knowing whether he was dead or alive. As for the conniving onlookers, they were nearer death than either duelist, their laughter was so excessive.

### III

The White Pheasant is one Hobart building Father Time unfortunately has mowed down. But there are old inns left. When I found the Ocean Child, I wished I were stopping there; the name seemed very appropriate to a wanderer from beyond the broad Pacific. However, I was already established at the Carlton Club, where there was much to hold me, such as the very superior cold corned beef (with let-

tuces) at luncheon, the delightfulness of the old carved and inlaid chess table that was brought to my room for me to write on, or the echo of fiddle music of a hundred years ago, when plays were given in the square innyard.

In Hobart I was the complete tourist, gawking in admiration. The cottages, though built in stone, put me in mind of Cape Cod's: they were built to be plain, low, and snug. I never tired of their simple geometry, nor of their polished knockers and white-scoured steps. As for their bright dooryard gardens, I loved them more and more. Hollyhocks nodded, fat roses nestled in fat rose trees, fuchsias poured out torrents of parti-colored bells, white lilies stood in sheaves. In the grander gardens on Battery Point were flagpoles rigged in nautical style, where retired sea captains could run up every signal from the Blue Peter to the cholera warning, with the red Australian flag fluttering over all. Elsewhere parrots turned one eye upon me from fancy cages; the tiny Australian terriers, seemingly made of darning cotton, would bark as was their bounden duty; or some tot in a pink sunbonnet would take three dancing steps toward the stranger, then shyly smile. All these things pleased me very deeply, and I made such a gawk of myself peering at them over the garden gates that it seemed only courteous, when I left town at last, to insert a notice in the *Mercury* thanking people for their forbearance.

I strolled the gum-tree groves of the hill Domain at twilight; while the valley yet shone green, and Mount Wellington still loomed a rich grape-blue, and the clear calls of after-supper hide-and-seek still came up blithely from the red-roofed town, presto! all at once the valley and harbor would break out in a rash of twinkles.

I prowled the curiosity shops, Ali Baba caves from whose dark ceilings



hung Empire chairs in dusty groves; there was old Doulton smouldering in deep blue and rich sienna, latticework Minton, curious engravings, books of glees and part songs. I bought plates that had come around the Cape with the Page family, whose Royal Mail Coaches in the old times made the Main Road gay with whip and horn. Jenny Comyn of *Pageant* rode in one of their coaches. In the Museum I looked at figureheads and ship models, remembering with almost local pride that the Derwent was the most historic harbor in all Australasia; Tasman, greatest of Dutch explorers, discovered it, Cook camped there, and Bass and Flinders, best-loved and gallantest of all Australian navigators, joined their young talents in exploring it after having proved that Tasmania was an island. I read the epitaphs in St. David's Park, and in the cathedral heard most perfect choir and organ music.

'This really is *too good*,' I decided one night, listening to the chants; the congregation did not dare to spoil such singing with any bleats of its own, but stood silent and respectful, like rows of fishes. It put me in mind of the old story, how the Devil once cheated the Lord out of a certain monastery's praises by singing in the choir there with such seeming divinity that all the monks fell silent. But in that instance the Lord asserted Himself, and told the abbot very plainly (in a dream) that He preferred praises sung sincerely, even if through the nose, to all this devilish perfection; whereas now . . . But now it was time for the anthem; the organ broke into a quiet warbling, the choir lifted hushed chords — merciful Heaven! it was 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring,' a Bach chorale I had known and loved for fifteen years, but never before heard sung. I thought I should blow up. 'I have had to come all the way to Hobart for this!' I inwardly

cried, quite forgetting my late complaints. Yet in the old St. David's it was that Parson Knopwood punctuated his sermons with worldly ejaculations, while the convict women, on the benches before him, wore iron horns for a reminder that they were sinful.

But Hobart's enchantment, in which white lilies and the horns of sin are thus strangely mingled, does not end at the city boundaries. The countryside, too, richly partakes in it. There are the great forests beyond Russell Falls, of a history longer than even the convict settlements'; as for the falls, in their tree-fern setting, they are of that outrageous prettiness that makes picture-postcard buying a joy. At Browns River, where duels were fought in the old days, golf is played now on a course so famously handsome that the painters' easels are a hazard to the game. On the Peninsula stand the huge ruins of Port Arthur, greatest of prisons in the land of prisons; it is no place for the fearful on a moonlit night, when ghosts go mad again in the dark Dumb Cell, or with splash of ghostly oars bear a comrade killed on the triangle to his Isle-of-the-Dead grave. Over the ridge is the Huon, where orchards tilt at playful angles on the valley sides, and the scent of cider presses rises in the sun; white everlastings, flaunting red lilies, mingle in the bracken; the bright blue wren, darling among Australian birds, dodges in and out among the rambler roses on the gray rail fences. But Hobart is the key and clue to it all, on its blue bay, under its green hills.

I find that I think rather selfishly of Hobart, like a mother who prays that her child may never grow up. When I come back again I do not want to find it changed. I shall jump into one of the landaus waiting at the foot of Elizabeth Street, if dreams come true, and call, 'Driver, take me into the past!' And with a flick of his whip he will do it.

## IV

Sydney's past was bedeviled not so much by the convicts as by the military. In fact the First Fleet of convict ships, under that remarkable man Governor Phillip, brought not the scum of the English prisons, but men selected with some care. All the same, the administration of the colony was very hard. There were not enough farmers among the First Fleeters to supply food to the settlement; Phillip abandoned Botany Bay at once because of its too-sandy soil and took his convicts to the next inlet, now Sydney's famous harbor; but farming was a perplexity in the new land, and, most tedious of all, the troops sent along for police were sulky and mutinous. Starvation faced the end-of-the-world colony that first year, and very starkly too; while the governor ate the same rations as the meanest convict, the soldiers robbed the stores.

At last a supply ship came. It was a cause for real rejoicing. The First Fleeters celebrated the event with a play, and that they were men of spirit was clear from the choice they made, not tableaux out of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but a satire on the military, Farquhar's lusty comedy, *The Recruiting Officer*. It must have been hard for the governor not to smile more than was officially wise when Plume (the officer) and Kite (his sergeant) on the stage discussed the men they had managed to recruit for His Majesty's forces:—

KITE. The butcher, Sir, will have his hands full, for we have two sheep-stealers among us.—I hear of a fellow too committed just now for stealing of horses.

PLUME. We'll dispose of him among the dragoons.—Have we never a poulterer among us?

KITE. Yes, Sir, the king of the gipsies is a very good one; he has an excellent hand at a goose or a turkey.

If these sly digs made the convicts chuckle and the soldiers redden, how much more apropos would they have been in the days of the New South Wales Corps! Phillip, broken in health by the too-cruel difficulties of his colonial task, was relieved, and sailed away to England; his place was taken by a man named Grose, and with Grose came the corps which had been formed to supplant Phillip's sulky regulars.

The newcomers were 'a set of men whose actions proved them to have been cast in the coarsest mould of genteel viciousness.' Their insubordination, vice, and racketeering were so firmly entrenched in the colony before Grose was retired that the subsequent governors one after another were humiliated in their attempts to reestablish decency. Last of all Bligh, hard-fisted genius of the *Bounty*, celebrated for his stern and overmastering command of men, came and was vanquished. The New South Wales Corps, in an extraordinary breach of discipline, threw the old sea hero into prison for attempting to curtail their privileges. Thus the *Bounty* mutiny was not the only one that stiff-necked man had to endure. Sydney treated him to a second.

This was going too far. Whitehall dissolved the New South Wales Corps in a hurry, and sent down Lachlan Macquarie with his own honest Scotch regiment to take charge; and though Macquarie was a vain man and carried the idealistic policies of Governor Phillip sometimes to an absurd extreme, the brighter phase of Sydney's history begins with him. Ex-convicts were made state architects, or magistrates, and when the self-righteous free settlers protested he said, 'I have only convicts, and others who should have been, to choose from.' With this to ponder, the 'Pure Merinos' went home sucking their thumbs.

But, if the new phase was brighter,

the dark old days are the ones most fascinating to read about. What a place Sydney was in its Dark Age! The select First Fleeters were followed by floods of convicts by no means so select. While the 'females' at the woolen mills stripped an unpopular guard naked and beat him from head to foot with bunches of nettles, the Corps privates, to satisfy a grudge, pulled down a free settler's cottage after breaking every dish and piece of furniture in it. When Bligh came to Sydney, two thirds of the children annually born in the colony were illegitimates. As for the Corps officers, their business was extortion rather than soldiering. They had obtained the monopoly of all stores brought in by ship, and sold them at a 500 per cent profit. They made rum the medium of exchange; a freeman's wages were paid in gin and brandy; and, since they controlled all such imports, they controlled the supply of money. They cornered the best lands, working the fields with convict labor fed, clothed, and housed at government expense — and then sold their produce to that same government at monopolistic prices. Oh, marvelously complete system — which dealt out flayed backs for punishment and drunkenness for a reward, among its servants, while heaping up riches for itself.

## V

Macquarie's arrival marked the end of the military's disgraceful history. But convict transportation went on, until the system broke down, thanks to its growing unpopularity in Australia and the absurdity and expense of it as a means of building up a distant colony.

'It is curious to observe with what nonchalance some of these fellows will turn the jingling of their chains into music whereto they dance and sing,' wrote one man aboard a convict ship.

The truth was that 'some of these fellows' were there by choice. Times were hard in England; if a man stole a thimble and managed to get caught at it, he would be given a sentence at Botany Bay, and so have his fare paid to the new world by the government. Good behavior there would entitle him, with luck, to a 'ticket of leave'; he could start working ground of his own before he was a free man, and so establish himself at public expense.

At the exciting period of the great Australian gold rush, when news of nuggets spread like wildfire through the slums of London, the number of petty felonies was a caution. The Thames was choked with convict ships setting sail. When the ships got to Australia the passengers, who had had good reason to dance to the tune of their chains' jingling, were too many to imprison, police, or use; so they were granted pardons wholesale on the wharves. The system was a farce — even Whitehall could see that. Melbourne too, the 'good' city, had proved that a community born in virtue<sup>1</sup> and reared without convict labor could grow rich and great. The evil of continuing to drain England's criminal class into the colonies was obvious enough to the people already there, especially those who had been convicts themselves; they clamored for cessation. And, at various dates in the various colonies, cessation came; 'the system' for many a long year now has been a mere historical thing, to be studied in the scholarly calm of Sydney's great Mitchell Library.

The jingling of those convict chains foretold a little what Australia's national character was to be. Devil-may-

<sup>1</sup> An advertisement in Melbourne's first newspaper offered the traveler who sojourned at Fawkner's Hotel 'mental recreation of a high order. . . . A very choice selection of books, including Novels, Poetry, Theology, History, etc. N. B. a late Encyclopedia.' — AUTHOR

care Jack, singing to the tune of it, knew that the trip might end quite as readily in the Dumb Cell at Port Arthur as in the Bendigo gold field. But *tra-la-la, la-la*, it was worth taking a sporting chance on, and he took it. How Australian! How in the spirit of a Sydney man! Nowhere in all the world does any city enthrone sport so wholeheartedly as Sydney does. Its very bridge is in the bold tradition. Though miles inland, it is visible miles out at sea, soaring up in an arch of grand audacity. 'It'll be a jolly good thing; and we can pay for it if luck's not *too* bad,' said the man in the street, and so it was built.

The harbor this bridge so grandly spans is no mere port, but a huge playground. Speedboats, sailing yachts, use it for a racing course; its miles of green-banked or rocky windings bring the idler yachtsman to swimming coves; billy teas send little spirals of smoke drifting up from turfy headland or gray gum-tree grove. But more to the taste of a Sydney swimmer are the ocean beaches, from Curl Curl to Cronulla. The glass-clear rough-and-tumble of surf gives him the sport he loves. Life-saving Clubs march in picturesque review, compete in lifeboat and life-belt races, surf sprints, and sand relays; a Sydney beach carnival is a picture of athletics at its good-humored best.

The importance of cricket and Australian rugby is immense. Bowls is a religion, golf an art, tennis a science, each demanding the whole-souled devotion of the man who practises it. As for horse racing, important throughout all Australasia to a degree an American can scarcely grasp, much less understand, it reaches the very climax of full-hearted madness in Sydney. An astute Imperial Government in the Honors List this New Year's conferred a knighthood on the president of Sydney's racing association.

Where the pedigree of a horse is so burningly the public concern, other things run some danger of being ignored. 'The second largest city in the Southern Hemisphere' has no symphony orchestra. It has an art gallery, however, like a window into the soul of a sport-loving public. Good gracious, what zest! What a splendid gamble on all these 'foreign masters' that nobody ever heard of! The battle scenes, the Queens of Sheba, are painted on canvases large enough, if laid flat, to give a ball on, complete with grand march and refreshments. Randwick Racecourse is not the only place in which sporting Sydney can be studied. . . . But who ever went to Sydney to feast on music and the fine arts? And while there is the harbor for a picture, or the bush beauty of Kuring-Gai Chase, or sleek horseflesh, or a koala curled up fast asleep at Koala Park, why mope over paint and canvas? Sydney's world is an outdoor world, with the brisk sea wind blowing through it.

Petty's Hotel, there, is a landmark. When I tasted the roast beef with Tasmanian cider, and the plum pudding, I knew how it happened that old Petty's had survived: it was too good to discard. Horses were discussed over the desk, latest 'results' were studied. My room looked into a courtyard where Mr. Langley, the proprietor, bred coachdogs; one morning I was taken to see the eight newest pups at their breakfast, like a row of fat white sausages. On another day this gentleman was to draw the high prize numbers in the current State Lottery and invited me to come watch the process. Thus when the curtain rose in Australia Hall that morning, and the great barrel with the numbered wooden marbles in it was noisily churned, there sat the little American visitor on the stage, with the press, radio announcer, Auditor-General's staff, and police. I felt very nifty.

This feeling gave way to amazement, however, when Mr. Collins, the manager, was so kind as to show me the State Lottery offices. Here were twenty-six ticket sellers, not counting cashiers, dealing out tickets, at a dollar each, so fast that they looked like Hindu goddesses with ten arms apiece. A tall traffic officer kept the flow of buyers in some kind of order, in one door and out another. On the next floor were the bulk ticket sales — buy as many as you like. The third and fourth floor were given over to the mail-order business, at which an army of clerks were working as if the devil stood behind them with an exceptionally hot pitchfork. On the top floor was the bookkeeping department. My eyes popped to see the prodigious activity of it all.

On the way down I told Mr. Collins I had once read Ashton's *History of English Lotteries*, and asked him what he thought about the complaint that had formerly led to the suppression of lotteries as a tax policy — that they rob the poor, who, having caught the fever, rob themselves. This was a tender point, but he answered it eloquently enough by ushering me into a cashier's cage to watch the crowd, which was overwhelmingly of the middle class. Everybody looked as if, after investing five shillings in a ticket, he'd have a shilling left over to spend on something foolish. Such people — women as well as men — every five days pour a hundred thousand dollars in taxes into that office with enthusiastic willingness. If such gambling is a vice, and such vice is a fetter, here was the jingling of chains whereto the modern Sydneyite does his dancing and singing.

## VI

Australia is a country as large as our own. Since it is cut up into only six states, most of these are of a size that

makes Texas look a peewee. The union of these states is recent; the power they individually retain is great. Roughly, half of the population of each state lives in its capital city. Each of these capitals has a character and mind of its own, decidedly. The stage is well set for a little jealousy, eh?

With the federation of the states, at the century's beginning, came the question of a federal capital. Since jealousy forbade giving any existing capital precedence over the others, a new city was decreed. A site of exceptional beauty was chosen for it in a broad mountain valley, and to obtain a city plan of suitable utility and splendor a competition was announced, in which the architects of the world were invited to take part. Australia's new capital, Canberra, was to be a city built near to the heart's desire.

It is interesting to remember that Washington came into being for like reasons and in a like way, except that its design was entrusted outright to an appointee, Major L'Enfant, a Frenchman.

In the Canberra competition second prize fell to the great Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen; first prize — and immortality with it — was won by an American, Walter Burley Griffin of Chicago. According to the Griffin plan Canberra's streets are rigorously laid down.

Basically the plan is a triangle that straddles a chain of lakes. In the portion of the triangle above the lakes will be the government departments, with the capitol on a hill at the apex. Below the lakes, along the triangle's base, will be grouped amphitheatres, museums, libraries, and such public buildings, from the Civic Centre at one lower corner to the Transportation Centre, with its railway station, at the other. Adjoining this triangle will be the campus of the Commonwealth University, the drill grounds and military architecture of Australia's



West Point, and the several residential areas, each with its own sports and shopping centre. A clear-eyed reasonableness pervades the plan, and the ingenuity with which each part has been worked out is a pleasure to study. The finest mountains rise at the ends of the most important vistas, and such humdrum details as street drainage have been given the thorough attention they deserve. Such is the Canberra Plan.

But poor Canberra! Born of the union of national idealism with state jealousy, she has been suckled on the colicky milk of the latter. May she soon be weaned! Her history, in a way that future historians may find quite poetic, strangely parallels that of Australia itself. Instead of convicts to lay her foundations there were the jealous ministers of jealous states. Instead of the deplorable New South Wales Corps to lead her to a stable maturity there has been dim-eyed bureaucracy, each little official pulling strings to his own myopic satisfaction. You would think Australia a land of a thousand years' burden of inertia, rather than one of radiant youth, if I told you the tale of Canberra's mismanagement.

Dear reader, put a little cotton in your ears. It is impossible for me to talk on this subject without raising my voice. But I shan't linger on it. Before I go on to pleasanter things, however, let me cite one toothache Canberra has put up with: Melbourne's attitude. Now Melbourne is a fine large city, of a proud tradition. Having read the Encyclopedia at Fawcner's Hotel at an early age, she has known how to make a good home for the infant federal government, until the time when the habitable beginnings of the government's own Canberra home were ready. You would think so intelligent a guardian would also know how to give the charge up, when the time came, with-

out making a scene. But here you are mistaken. More than once I blushed for the honest old city while I was in Australia.

For example, the Wood-Products Laboratories, intended to be a part of the Forestry School at Canberra, were suddenly made permanent in Melbourne. The old lady, it would seem, had been doing some clever work behind the scenes. And the Auditor-General, whose offices (according to a plan familiar to him for the last twenty years) are this year to be moved from the interim capitol to the permanent one, was rending the air of Melbourne with surprised bellows of protest. In the same tone, if not in the same words, he was calling Canberra what Tasmania was called a hundred years ago, 'an isthmus between earth and hell.' 'Very little could be worse than eating one's Christmas dinner in Canberra,' I read in the Melbourne *Argus*, and, since I was traveling to learn, I thought I might well go up to this accursed place, to find out what real misery was — where, of course, I found not misery, but flowers and kindness, and the very hopeful beginnings of one of earth's finest cities. The Christmas pudding had not bitterness in it, but a lucky threepenny piece. The sparkling hock was downright jolly. There were paper caps. At matins rosemary scented the church; 'No more let sin and sorrow grow,' we sang. If Christmas is the feast of Glad Hope, what place could be better for its celebration than Canberra?

## VII

Parrots, out of a cage, the Minnesota traveler is not used to seeing. Yet here they were, perched on the gate at the foot of Mount Ainslie. A kookaburra in a gum tree was telling his mate a joke in loud gabbling tones, and then broke out laughing at it him-

self. A flock of galahs wheeled, all their rose-pink breasts shining in sudden unison. There was no doubt about it: I was in Australia. Looking round at the subtle colors of gum tree and wattle and silver grass on the mountainside, I guessed what homesickness must assail an Australian in the too-green landscapes of our northern world. As for the sky, it as usual was half limpid blue, half cameo cloud heaped up in negligence away to the deeper blue of mountain ridges. Good gracious, what skies Canberra has! A thunder-showery day there is like a visit to some supernatural sculpture gallery, whose complex lighting varies according to the whim of an Olympian electrician. 'Special! Apollo and Mercury at the switchboard this afternoon,' I rather expected to read in the morning's paper.

But this day was the usual sunny kind. I peeled off my shirt to enjoy it more whole-hidedly; and when I had climbed to the mountain top, since it was a fine lonely place for mouth-organ playing, I unpent the harmonies in mine, while looking down fondly on the young city.

From Mount Ainslie the future Canberra is best seen. In the valley, the nonsensical scattered way in which the city is being built is a tease and a discouragement. But from above it is not hard to perceive how these scattered items, some temporary, some incomplete, ultimately will be joined to make a true city. The position of the future lakes is plainly marked by the flood basin of Molonglo Creek; the temporary Parliament House, seemingly hewn from one solid block of plaster of Paris, very nearly marks the position of the future capitol. At the end of another vista rises the tree-crowned knoll of the Civic Centre. Yes, it is easy to see the beautiful orderliness of the plan from Mount Ainslie. It made my heart swell. I wished I were a

citizen of the place, for the splendid fun of throwing my energies into that pioneer life *de luxe*. Much depends on these first thousands of Canberrans: they form the best-educated and most intelligent large community in Australasia. But will their children's city have chamber music? Festivals? Rowing clubs? A first-rate bookstore? A memorable restaurant? How many splendid enterprises there are to attempt! And how necessary it is to attempt them if they are to *bel*! And how hopeful it is to find, already in existence and enthusiastically used, a spick-and-span swimming bath, and a museum of anatomy that must take rank as one of the best scientific displays in any country. The first unit of the Federal Library, the first unit of a War Museum, are now being built; the air tingles with the vitality of a growing thing. The very flowers rush into a riot of blossoming as if they too were anxious to play a generous part. There is something inspiring, even joyful, in a visit to Canberra.

But restraint and the calm large vision are as necessary in a growing city as enthusiasm is. The Canberra Plan is not merely a street diagram, but organic groupings of buildings. I am afraid Mr. Griffin might find the latter aspect of his scheme rather lost sight of. It never was taken very seriously, perhaps. He had the misfortune for a while of watching, at close range, the unhappy progress of his ideal city in the hands of government pettifoggers: he was made Superintendent of Construction, and so forth and so forth, with everything but epaulets and a sword; however, during the years he held this honorable title, not one stone was laid in Canberra. Pettifoggery invented one hindrance after another. Wiser are those geniuses who wing great competitions and fall dead in the hour of their rapture: they avoid all the inevitable disappointments. The city

owes to its first superintendent, thus, only its planting. But here was a grand task, and in no other way could he so quickly have outlined, on the site, the ultimate beauty of his city. And it is to the experiments in soil adaptability he made that Canberra's plantations of young trees — bewilderingly extensive — owe their robust health.

Very likely Mr. Griffin, who seems to be a man of abundant energy and teeming imagination, would like nothing better than to see his vision of Canberra consistently coming true, with every shop, cottage, and government building designed and placed according to his own ideas. And very perfect a city Griffinsville would be, too, I'll bet a cookie. But just here it seems rather wiser, somehow, to let some imperfection, even some incongruity, creep in. After all, the grand general scheme has been laid down. Perhaps this is where the designer's task should end. Now is the time for this or that Australian to play his part as well as he knows how, filling in the details. This, of course, is what is being done, though not, I hope, without repeated and prayerful study of the city plan as a whole.

Very significant is a new attitude of the Australian people generally toward their capital: long out of patience with it for the balky, hind-end-foremost, expensive way in which it was being realized, they are beginning to find themselves proud of the place. They have discovered, too, that it makes an excellent base for excursions into some of their country's finest mountains. They even come for Christmas dinner now; the hotels bulged at holiday time when I was there. And with a new shy pleasure they lend a hand toward bringing it near to the heart's desire — not merely by paying taxes, which is a

glum and heartless matter, but by sending roses to the National Rose Garden. A man with five shillings invested in such a gift has a new interest in the good destiny of the city, if I know my own heart.

Some cities are loved because they hold the past in an enchantment — as does Venice or Hobart. Others are fascinating because the present pulses in them so vigorously — as it does in New York or Sydney. But Canberra stirs the visitor in a new way. It is no mere monument to man's aspiration toward the finer life, but an active attempt, on a splendid scale, to fulfill that aspiration. It is the future's own city.

When I go back to Hobart I shall be saddened, I fear. Father Time will have mowed down something that I shall miss. Sydney I shall find its usual breezy self. But Canberra — there is the city I shall hurry to, because I know I shall find it grown in power and beauty. I think with excitement of that next visit. Will the lakes have come into being? Will the capitol be started? Will there be pageantry in the just-completed amphitheatre, to tell the story of how a nation born in convict ships can rise to the fulfillment of splendid dreams?

'You should see it when the wattles are in flower!' said an old man to me proudly. Bless him, he was a Melbourne man, too, who had come up to live his old age in Canberra with the son whose garden he was watering. Born in a tent where skyscrapers now loom, he never had lost the ardor of the pioneer. 'Lovely!' he said, thinking of wattle time, and waved the hose in a glad and ample gesture. And the spray, just in an instant then, caught the bright sun in a drift of rainbow colors.

# SMOKE

BY CATHARINE MORRIS WRIGHT

THE Argonauts who hunted Golden Fleece,  
Setting out boldly on a doubtful quest;  
Old lean Columbus, leaving lands of peace  
To find what granaries lay toward the West;  
Why, even Cæsar, on a British road  
Marching his men beneath an English rain  
Haughty with conqueror's pride, has felt a goad  
That brought him to his chimney-side again.

And who shall see, against whatever sky  
He calls his own, from shingled roof or thatched,  
Be he of laboring men or gentle folk,  
The thin blue token of his home float high  
And not be glad? None live who have not watched  
And felt their hearts rise faster with the smoke.

# OPIUM FOR THE WORLD

BY J. O. P. BLAND

## I

AT the Eighteenth Session of the League of Nations Advisory Committee on Opium, held in May 1934, the American representative, Mr. Stuart J. Fuller, drew attention to the dangerous situation which has arisen out of the vast increase of opium cultivation, and the consequent manufacture of narcotics, in China. He urged his colleagues of the Advisory Committee to face the facts of this situation, which he described as a menace to the world. He drew particular attention to the Chinese Government's recent declaration, which alleged that the cultivation of opium had been strictly prohibited, 'in accordance with the Opium Suppression Act of 1932, except in certain bandit-infested areas and regions under militarist domination, where raw opium was still produced,' and he declared that the impression thus created, of a comparatively limited production, was directly contrary to the facts. The truth of the matter was that the opium-growing areas now include the greater part of several of the larger provinces—Yünnan, Kweichow, Szechwan, Shensi, Shansi, Kansu, and Jehol; their production, steadily increasing, is at least seven times greater than that of all the rest of the world, a state of affairs which naturally leads to large-scale smuggling and export of the drug. As a result, opium smoking in the United States has lately shown a marked increase.

'The American Narcotics Administration,' said Mr. Fuller, 'views this development with alarm' and looks to the Chinese Government, *which controls the ports concerned in this traffic*, to take effective measures to stop it. He pointed out that two years previously China's representative at the Committee's Sixteenth Session had reported that his government was investigating the opium traffic and the manufacture of narcotics, with a view to adopting remedial measures; so far, however, nothing had been heard of the results of this investigation, despite the fact that China is by treaty bound to keep the world informed of the situation within her borders. Detailed information was required, he said, with regard to the provincial monopolies, now established in ten provinces, for supplying opium to addicts; also reliable statements concerning the amount of the revenues derived from these monopolies, which in certain instances are known to constitute a very large proportion of the provincial revenues.

In order to understand why it is that China is unable, even if she were willing, to supply the specific information called for by Mr. Fuller, and the reasons which render it most unlikely that either the Advisory Committee or the Permanent Central Opium Board at Geneva will 'face the facts,' we must cast a retrospective eye over the history of the Chinese opium question.



The importance which has been attached by the League Council to the regulations promulgated in December 1932 by the Chinese Government, with regard to opium and narcotic drugs, would seem to imply a general indifference to this history. People forget that, as far back as 1838, a determined attempt was made by the Emperor and a few high-minded officials to put an end to the traffic, but that, as Morse observes, it failed, like others which had gone before, because its success was 'rendered impossible through the active connivance of every Chinese official who came into touch with the traffic.' Prohibition failed then, as it fails to-day, because, as Pearl Buck says, 'public opinion in China approves that each family is expected to care for its own. As yet it would be considered a serious lapse on the part of an individual if he let his family suffer in order to serve the State more honestly.'

## II

The anti-opium movement which led to the issue of the famous Edict of November 1906 was instigated by Tang Shao-yi, a progressive Western-educated Cantonese then holding high office at Peking and now one of the Elder Statesmen of the Republic. It was one of several manifestations of Young China's newly awakened sense of inferiority, inspired by Japan's victory over Russia. The Edict provided for a complete cessation of all poppy cultivation within ten years, for drastic restrictions on opium smoking under license, and for a gradual reduction in the import of foreign opium, to be completely stopped in ten years. Dr. Morrison, the famous *Times* correspondent at Peking, described the Regulations imposed by this Edict as 'the most masterly State document issued in China for many years, leaving no loophole for evasion.' Public opinion in

England and the United States, led by the missionary societies, was warmly sympathetic and generally hopeful of good results. By the Anglo-Chinese Opium Convention of 1907, Great Britain agreed to the gradual abolition of the Indian trade, *pari passu* with the cessation of poppy growing in China, the first three years to be experimental and a test of the Chinese Government's good faith and effective authority. By 1910, the reduction effected in cultivation was generally estimated at 25 per cent, thus demonstrating once again the readiness of the Chinese people to submit to constituted authority, firmly administered and morally justifiable. The abolition movement appealed to the instinctive morality of the masses and its initial success reflected the people's belief in the sincerity of the government's intentions.

With a view to controlling and limiting the importation of foreign opium, the first international Conference was held at Shanghai in February 1909, the American Bishop Brent presiding. The Conference, recording its belief in 'the unswerving sincerity of the government of China in their efforts to eradicate the production and consumption of opium throughout the Empire,' urged the adoption of international regulations calculated to assist China in her declared purpose. In May 1911, the British Government concluded another agreement with China, in which continued coöperation towards the complete cessation of the opium traffic was assured, and it was agreed, *inter alia*, that Indian opium should not be conveyed into any province of China in which native opium had been completely suppressed. A second international Conference was held at The Hague in January 1912, twelve nations being represented; the powers concerned there pledged themselves to coöperate in regulating the production and distribution of opium

and the trade in narcotic drugs and in preventing the smuggling thereof into China.

What the ultimate results of the anti-opium movement might have been, had the Manchu Government not been overthrown by the Revolution of 1911, is matter for surmise. After the Revolution, Young China, greatly stimulated by the declaration of the Republic, took to themselves all the credit for the great improvement which had been recorded in 1909-1910, and Sun Yat-sen was profuse with promises of drastic measures for the complete abolition of poppy cultivation; but these promises were accompanied by a violent agitation for an immediate and complete cessation of the Indian trade, which by treaty was a matter dependent solely upon China's own remedial measures and good faith. It was not long before the attitude of the Republican leaders, and the fact that several provinces were openly resuming the cultivation of opium, justified serious doubts as to their sincerity of purpose and, as a writer in the *Times* observed, foreshadowed 'the establishment of a monopoly in the hands of a class which, in all our national experience, has been wont to put money before righteousness and expediency before good faith.' By the end of 1911, it was manifest that the chief motive underlying the agitation against the Indian trade lay in the desire of the new régime to establish a lucrative monopoly in the handling of the native drug.

The Peking Government itself had created grave misgivings as to its sincerity, by offering to pledge the opium revenues of Hupeh and Szechwan as security for a loan intended to run for forty years. The output of opium by the seven great producing provinces in 1912 was larger than in any year since 1907; in Yunnan, the authorities had organized a company for the cultiva-

tion of opium, not only for internal consumption, but for export to Tongking. In Chekiang and Hunan, cultivation had been openly resumed with the connivance, if not with the protection, of the Provincial Assemblies. All these things were known to the Republican leaders, but their only concern was to put a stop to Indian imports of the drug; with this end in view, Sun Yat-sen addressed a moving appeal, based on high moral principles, to the British nation. By the close of 1912, belief in China's 'unswerving sincerity' was no longer possible. The predictions of the 'pessimists' had been abundantly fulfilled, and under the mandarins of the new dispensation history repeated itself, their bad faith being covered, as it had been fifty years before, 'under the shielding mask of their impotence.'

When, after the Great War, the world's attention was again drawn to China, the anti-opium movement, in so far as poppy cultivation was concerned, had become a dead letter. Visiting Peking in 1920, I found that the traffic in opium had been diverted into new ways, but it was quite unconcealed, and vastly profitable to the authorities concerned. The old opium shops had been suppressed, and the fact loudly proclaimed abroad, but business in the drug was still briskly conducted (as it is to-day) by the agents and myrmidons of military and civil officials. As a moral crusade, the opium movement was dead, but as a political instrument it continued to have its uses. Just as formerly Young China, encouraged by the anti-opium and missionary societies, used to declare that China could and would abolish opium completely if only the Indian trade were stopped, so, after the war, they declared that the chief obstacle to this reform lay in the limitation of China's right to tariff autonomy. When this had been successfully negotiated, they endeavored,

by a widely conducted campaign of propaganda in America and England, to convince a sympathetic world that China could not be expected to suppress the opium and morphia trades until the 'Unequal Treaties' and the foreigners' extraterritorial privileges had been abolished. To those who know China, the idea that the abolition of extraterritoriality would put an end to opium cultivation is grimly humorous.

### III

So much for the past. But the present situation is far more serious, for the reason that to the enormous increase of opium production by China must be added the large-scale manufacture in that country of morphia and heroin, and a rapidly increasing traffic in these drugs, not only in China but for purposes of export, especially to America. In other words, China's opium trade has become an international problem. Since the establishment of the Nationalist Government at Nanking, under Chiang Kai-shek, seven years ago, the world has been continually assured by China's diplomatic agents abroad, most notably at Geneva, of the sincerity of their government's efforts to abolish opium cultivation and smoking; but the fact remains, incontestable, that the opium traffic has become a major source of officialdom's revenues, encouraged and protected in practically every province. The *China Year Book for 1931* contains a summary, compiled from the reports of resident missionaries, which shows conclusively that the assurances to the League of Nations by the Chinese Government's representatives, its pious resolutions and exhaustive regulations, are worthless. The plain truth of the matter is that China is now responsible for nine tenths of the world's opium production, and that the poppy is grown not only with the connivance

of the officials, but often by their orders.

On the eve of the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Opium at Geneva in January 1931, the Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs announced at Nanking that his government had issued new regulations for the inspection of poppy-growing areas by district magistrates, and for the imposition of fines. It has since been repeatedly shown, however, that these 'fines' are regularly levied by the authorities on cultivation which is frequently compulsory. A report from one province alone (Kweichow), published by the *North China Herald* in May 1932, showed that 70 to 80 per cent of the districts visited by the writer were openly growing opium under this system of fines.

The accumulating evidence of the cynical insincerity of the Chinese Government is continually accompanied, as in the past, by complaints that its earnest efforts at reform are being frustrated by the action of foreign powers. At a meeting of the Advisory Committee at Geneva in February 1931, the Chinese delegate (Dr. C. T. Wang) professed to deplore the fact that foreigners in China were engaged in the illicit drug traffic, and endeavored to concentrate attention on this admittedly deplorable result of the lawless condition of the country. He then proceeded to appeal to those foreign governments which have colonies in the Far East to desist from raising revenue therein from monopolies for opium smoking. In all seriousness, he asked the Committee to believe that his government was unable 'to bring relief to the thousands of opium smokers in these colonies' so long as these monopolies continued to exist. He therefore urged the powers concerned 'to make a real sacrifice and to co-operate with China in the fullest measure.'

It was, in fact, the old policy of evasion in a new form; the same type of argument as that which ascribes China's failure to reform her administration of justice to the 'Unequal Treaties.' Its insincerity was made manifest by the Chinese Government's subsequent refusal to send a delegate to the International Conference on Opium Smoking, convened by the League of Nations and held at Bangkok in November 1931.

Until quite recently the attitude of Geneva towards China in this matter of opium has been one of credulous complaisance, an attitude imposed, no doubt, by the League's unwillingness to face the fact that so long as wholesale cultivation continues, and so long as China declines to sanction any international inquiries, its own activities must continue to be purely face-saving and futile. But at the Eighteenth Session of the Advisory Committee the American delegate introduced a new note into the proceedings by submitting the critical survey of the situation in China and Manchuria to which I referred at the beginning of this article. Space does not permit of more than a few brief extracts from this survey, but the whole document (published in the League's official report of the Eighteenth Session) deserves serious attention.

#### IV

According to the information submitted by Mr. Fuller, the official estimate of China's total production of opium in 1930 was 12,000 tons, as against a total of 1770 tons for all the rest of the world; since that date the output has greatly increased. Mr. Fuller described this state of affairs as 'a menace to the world which should no longer be tolerated.' He reminded the Committee that one of the principal conclusions at which it had arrived was that 'the accumulation anywhere of

large quantities of opium, or of opium derivatives, inevitably leads to an increase of addiction, not only in the country where such accumulation is found, but also in other countries to which the drugs can be smuggled.' Speaking for America alone, he declared that the traffic in opium from China to the United States is materially increasing, together with a marked recrudescence of opium smoking.

On behalf of the American people, he voiced a plea that China should resolutely take the matter in hand. 'The situation is too serious,' he said, 'to await a long investigation and the drafting and adoption of new laws. The existing laws provide the necessary powers; why not enforce them, before the situation is completely out of control? It is not long-drawn-out investigation or new legislation that the situation calls for; it is action, and the world now looks to China for such action.' He ended by expressing the hope that 'the Chinese Government would come to the aid of the friends of China by undertaking at once such police measures as are necessary to stop this flood of opium and the growing production of morphine and heroin.'

The Chinese delegate, Dr. Hoo Chitsai, while admitting the seriousness of the situation, regretted that he was not in a position to announce any improvement with regard to narcotics; he then proceeded to create the usual diversion by ascribing China's inability to cope with the evil to causes of foreign origin, beyond her control. 'So long as the heavy clouds on the political horizon of the Far East have not been dispelled,' he said, 'it is impossible for the Chinese Government to devote to the question of narcotics all the attention which its solution requires. The problem of opium will only cease to exist when the political situation has been cleared up.' He drew another red herring across the line of inquiry by asking

the Committee to adopt a resolution requesting those governments which possess extraterritorial rights in China to deport all their nationals who have there taken part in the illicit manufacture of drugs, and to withdraw their protection from all coasting or river trading vessels in Chinese waters which are employed continuously in the illicit drug traffic, imposing heavy fines on such vessels.

The Chinese delegate, it will be observed, was wholly unconcerned with the only important facts of the situation: namely (1) that China's enormous output of raw opium is produced, and marketed, under the protection and often by the orders of the provincial and military authorities; and (2) that it is this opium which, either under license or by smuggling, supplies the drug consumed by the Chinese communities in the foreign colonies of the Far East, and provides the raw material for the native morphine factories.

Mr. Lyall, Chairman of the Permanent Opium Board at Geneva (always a keen apologist for the Chinese Government), stated, in reply to Mr. Fuller, that the provinces which grew the most opium, Yunnan and Szechwan, had also the greatest number of illicit factories, and that 'the situation in these provinces was not under the control of the Nanking Government.' He supplemented this remarkable admission (which stultifies China's claim to be a united, organized state) by observing that the most practical suggestion which had been made for bringing these two provinces under the Central Government's authority, and thus enabling it to deal with the problem of morphine and heroin, was 'that the League should assist the Chinese Government in restoring prosperity in agriculture, in building roads, in introducing health measures, and in education.' In other words, he proposed that a situation which the American

delegate has rightly described as a menace to the whole world should be allowed to continue, undisturbed, pending the leisurely introduction of social and economic reforms throughout a lawless and inaccessible region as large as France and Germany put together. It would be difficult to cite a more typical instance of the smoke-screen tactics employed by and on behalf of the Chinese Government at Geneva, or to convey a better idea of the atmosphere of insincerity which has hitherto confused and concealed the facts, which the American delegate now implores the Committee to face.

In regard to the Chinese delegate's specific proposal that heavy fines should be levied upon foreign vessels carrying opium, the following extracts from an article published by the *Shanghai Evening Post* on June 2, 1934, will enable the reader to form an idea of the spirit in which that proposal was made. The article is from the pen of Mr. H. G. W. Woodhead, editor of *Oriental Affairs*.

It seems time that the hypocrisy with which discussion of the opium problem in China is always enshrouded was dispelled.

Let us take but a single instance: the proposed levying of vindictive fines on foreign vessels carrying the drug. Is the Chinese delegate at Geneva unaware that on the river steamers from Shanghai to Chungking it is as much as a foreign officer's life is worth to interfere with opium smugglers and that the Chinese authorities have been forced to the conclusion that a similar discretion is desirable unless they court violent deaths? Does he not know that armed fights have been staged, even in Shanghai, between government troops and police, for the possession of cargoes of opium and the control of a morphine factory? Is he ignorant of the fact that less than a year ago a whole shipload of Persian opium was imported direct from Bushire on a steamer flying the Chinese flag, and that the cargo was landed in launches escorted by officers of the Bureau of Public Safety? Does he



not know that as soon as the French Concession authorities made a cleanup of the opium dens and sales shops they were removed to Nantsao, and thenceforth sold their wares in packages bearing a uniform (monopoly) stamp?

## V

How rapid has been the recent growth of this world menace the reader may gather from another important statement made by Mr. Fuller before the Advisory Committee in regard to China's increasing importations of acid acetic anhydride, a substance whose only use in China consists in the manufacture of heroin. Mr. Fuller stated that for the last two years it had been imported in quantities which afford ground for serious apprehension. Whereas the supply of heroin required for the whole world's medical purposes is estimated at one and a half tons per annum, present indications point to the manufacture *every month* in China, from the importations of acid acetic anhydride passing through Shanghai alone, of an amount equal to the whole world's medical needs for a year. At the same time, the customs returns show that the importations of caffeine have increased from an average of

sixty kilos to sixty tons per annum. Small wonder, then, that the number of addicts are to be counted in millions, and that those who know the facts regard this new peril as something far more serious than civil wars, banditry, or foreign invasions, inasmuch as it threatens the very existence of the Chinese people. It certainly constitutes a danger more formidable than the cultivation and smoking of opium, for a man may smoke his pipe unto a ripe old age and be little or none the worse, but he who becomes addicted to morphine or heroin is doomed.

The American delegate at Geneva deserves the thanks of the civilized world if only because he has shattered the delusion, hitherto prevalent at Geneva, that in the matter of opium and the drug traffic China is more sinned against than sinning. It remains to be seen whether the collective intelligence and benevolent activities represented by the League of Nations, discarding sentimental irresponsibility, will bring such moral pressure to bear upon the Chinese Government, ever anxious to save its political 'face,' that it may be persuaded to take resolute steps to put an end to the manufacture and traffic of narcotic drugs.

# HERITAGE

BY GEORGE LIBAIRE

## I

Nor long ago I received a fat envelope from an attorney down in the country. The envelope contained a blue folder — it was a copy of a deed — and a covering letter. I looked first at the deed. After a lengthy preamble, it described a frame house on the southwest bank of the Shrewsbury River, 'together with a messuage and plantation of two acres, be it more or less.' The owner of that property, it appeared, could do as he pleased with it — could do anything, that is, except build a smithy there, or run a tanyard.

The attorney's letter was brief. Everything, he said, stood as it had been left. The house was in reasonable repair, the acreage was nearer four than two. Control was in my hands. Would I come down at my convenience, look over the premises, and say what should be done?

I acknowledged the letter and asked that keys to the house be sent me. Always, or so it now seemed, there had slumbered in the back of my mind the recognition that some day that plot of shrunken acreage, that great rectilinear house with its wide command of glittering water and its little grove full of singing birds, would be mine to dispose of. But fifteen years of wandering scholarship and footloose journalism are not, perhaps, ideal preparation for assuming a responsibility of that sort. I put off the visit of inspection as long as I could. Late in April, though,

there came a spell of June-like weather that left me no reason for more delay; so down I went to spend a day in the country.

The train journey is a matter of fifty miles or so — it used to be considerably less, by boat — and I was surprised to find how far around the bay the city now reaches. At Belford, within six miles of my destination, I saw a factory standing in the tidal meadows where my forefathers used to gather their salt hay. In that factory, as I did not need to be told, fish are ground and squeezed to make oil for paint. Even as late as my childhood, however, those menhaden were put to a different use. They were scattered in shoals over the upland fields, where in the spring the virtue yielded by every fish would be traced in separate patches of blue-green among the winter wheat.

The station taxi was so long and shiny that I doubted whether it would be able to make the narrow carriage turn among the shrubbery of the side yard. I knew it would not when I saw how carefully the driver, a stranger to me, nursed his way around bends after we had left the concrete. I paid him off at the gate, told him when to call for me, and brushed through the misty green of lilacs that seemed bent on closing the serpentine pathway altogether.

The brick terrace by the front steps was slippery from disuse, and the steps

themselves rang hollow. But when I had turned the key the upper half of the Dutch door sprang inward just as it always did — as though hospitable generations had unfitted it to stay closed. And then too, just as always, there greeted me the farmhouse smell that never, apparently, can be got rid of. Stockbrokers, a portrait painter, an editor, old ladies with their companions, — a whole procession of assorted tenantry, — have tried to air out that paneled hall, with the clear sweep of sea breeze blowing through it. Sixty years or better have passed since pans of cream were set to curdle in the white-washed cellar, and the root bins down there were full. Yet that homely smell persists.

A house that has stood empty is like a horse too long on the tether: it sweats. I opened all the doors and as many windows as I could, and left the house to dry while I strolled around the boundary fences.

## II

It was a forenoon of luminous radiance, heightened by occasional flaws of sea mist; a spring day of such breath-taking loveliness that the fashionable poet of our Aprils, had she been by, would doubtless have complained of it. There, however, only the mourning dove complained, where his mate was already nesting among willows by the river bank.

In the tall spruce beyond the perennial garden a cardinal whanged away at his bar of silver. Below the bank, where there was a woodpile for cover, the Carolina wren called 'Chickory-chickory-chickory,' clearer than any street hawker could cry it; and then, after a decent interval, he would get his faint answer from among the cedars across the stream. As I came near the woodpile he quit his song and bustled angrily among last autumn's leaves,

making a rumpus that would have done credit to a large domestic fowl. Presently he ran out on the far side. He was no bigger than my thumb.

I made my circuit and sat down near the spruce, on a garden bench, facing the house with my back to the sun. Perhaps, I thought to myself, it would have been better if I had come down before the season was so well advanced. Then, chilled and perfunctory, I should have had eyes for nothing but the inroads of mice, dry rot, and fallen trees. March is the time to mend fence: April is ploughing weather.

Faced with that old house, the strict utility of which no remodeling had been able to conceal, and with the traces of past industry all around me, I felt ill at ease. What would William Johnson have said if he could have seen a great-grandson of his sitting stark idle in the sun on an April weekday?

I never knew old William, or his wife Sarah, either; they had died long before my time; but their memory was like a physical presence still, in my childhood. Together they had dominated that house from end to end. As I looked now at the kitchen door, I smiled to think how often I had seen my great-uncle Mortimer sneak in there, furtively clutching his umbrella. He was an old man by then, who had been the youngest of Sarah's eleven children; the spoiled black sheep, whose mother finally had found out — among other things — that he once lit his cigar with a ten-dollar bill. Sarah, of course, had been dead for years before I knew Mort Johnson. But even so he would only come into the kitchen, no farther.

Not that the life of those old days had been frugal; not a bit of it. A willful waste, so it was said then, made a woeful want. Frugality, however, ran counter to the spirit of that time, when it was still supposed that children would grow up, as their fathers had grown up before them, prepared to live well but

to live financially and otherwise within their means, under an economy of limited expectations well defined — an economy in which there was little ready coin, much free hospitality, small prospect of sudden wealth for any, but a competence within reach of all save the shiftless or the drunkard.

The sun had gone round behind the spruce, and there was a sea chill in the shade, so I started toward the house. On my way I crossed the quarter acre of flat turf that now grew where Sarah, who never held much with patent medicines and preferred to concoct her own, had tended her herb garden and her flower beds. She always gardened with gloves and parasol for the sake of gentility, and powdered her face with cornstarch against the sun. And there by the side door, looking south, she had made a little pavement of large flat stones screened about with Rose of Sharon, where she bleached her fine linens. One of the bushes was there yet, I found, and a few of the stones could still be seen, tilting edgewise out of the grass. Sarah must have had a passion for those stones. She found them on her walks through the fields, and used to bring them home one at a time. No one ever understood how she could have done it, for she was very slight and frail.

The house was aired enough for comfort. I wandered through the echoing rooms, swung doors to and fro, peered into cupboards, and admired once more the pervasive grace of sash frame and moulding, panel and mantelpiece. All of that, so I had heard, was improvised on the spot by the local joiner, following the few designs he had learned in his apprenticeship. Although he did not know it, his designs were original with the brothers Adam.

William Johnson, of course, knew nothing about that either. What he was after was space and warmth. He had set up housekeeping in a modest

eighteenth-century cottage, which his family soon outgrew. In 1838 he expanded it to sixteen rooms. His prime specification was that he should be able to reach up and put the flat of his hand on any of the ceilings. If a man could do that, William said, he would know he had come indoors. A mere six-footer can barely brush those ceilings with his fingertips.

By all accounts, William Johnson must have been more taken for granted than he was beloved. This seems strange, for he was clearly a man of bold fancy and commanding presence. Yet when I came now to recall what I had heard about him from such of his children as I had known, he might as well have been a sort of cornucopia — an undemanding source of seasonable benefits. To his wife, that is, and to all his children but one.

### III

That one child was William's youngest daughter, my great-aunt Emma. She was always simply Aunt Emma to me. Until she died, when I was about twelve, I doubt whether it ever occurred to me that she was old enough to be my grandmother. She seemed, indeed, little older than myself, but with a longer memory. And there in the second-best front parlor where she had been married, and where she always liked to sit when she used to come calling, I found it pleasant to pause a moment, remembering her — pleasant, and somehow inspiring.

Aunt Emma's life must have been full of chagrin. I knew that, even in those days. But only once, and then half in jest, did I know her to mention her tragic disappointment. 'Try not to break anybody's heart,' she had said to me, 'and try to remember that I told you. But a lot of good my telling you will do. You're young — and heart-breaking is young people's business. At

least, that's the one business young people never neglect.'

Her face, with its skin of a withered rose, was placid when she said that, and her hazel eyes were calm. Momentarily, though, her voice had had the knife edge, impersonal, parrotlike, that one associates with the eighteenth century. All the Johnsons had that quality of voice if you stirred their emotions.

In my boyhood, however, it was not Aunt Emma's fortitude that drew me to her. It was a quality less astringent than fortitude, though perhaps related to it — what I have learned since then to call the historical sense. All during her mature years, circumstance had compelled Aunt Emma to live strictly from day to day. Yet she possessed to a remarkable degree that quality of which I speak — that sense of the living past as a source of sustaining power. Moreover, she could communicate that power as if by contagion to anyone who was able to receive it. In particular she gave me three glimpses of William Johnson — trifling enough in themselves, no doubt — that grew in time to have almost the character of shared experience.

One autumn in her early childhood, when she had been visiting cousins in New York, William brought her home down the bay in his sloop *Seaflower*. He had come in to market the night before with a deckload of Shrewsbury oysters, and he hoped to make the thirty-mile run back, empty, before dark. However, the wind failed after they had passed the Narrows. They lay drifting for hours in the hazy October sunshine off Sandy Hook. Emma had been up since dawn, and presently she went to sleep on the deck, wrapped in her father's peajacket.

She awakened tense and frightened. It was bright moonlight. There was a chill wind blowing and the sail was full, yet they did not move. Though driven

now by a stiff following breeze, they were caught in the narrow mouth of the river with the ebb tide running full against them. William bent to the tiller, singing at the top of his lungs as he held the *Seaflower* head-on against the choppy rush of deep water. The mast swayed and groaned in its chocks like a live thing, and underfoot the deck quivered from the strain, but they might as well have been anchored. Emma could see the lights of home, and she burst into tears.

Disappointment was mingled with her terror. William had a lockerful of presents for the older girls, and his pocket was heavy with coppers for the small fry. There would be a tumbling scramble for pennies scattered across the big kitchen floor, — squeals and delighted laughter when bundles were opened, — but after her exposure to the night air she would be hustled off to bed, deserted and forgotten. She crept as close to William as she dared, and was miserable behind a heap of tarpaulins.

Then it was morning. She was back in her own bed once more, and clutched in her hand was a knotted twist of rag. Inside it she found a shiny new 'fish-scale' — a silver three-cent piece.

As the boys and girls grew up, William did his best to keep them near him. First and last there were six daughters to be married off. Every one of them, following the family custom, brought her husband home to live for a year or so, until Sarah had seen her through her first confinement. And after all of them were gone William still kept their swings and playhouses in repair, under the branchy white oaks that overhung the cove.

When some of his grandchildren had come to supper, very quiet and suppressed beneath Sarah's eye, William would take them out under the oak trees afterward and let them romp in the cool of the evening, while he dozed



in his hammock. If they fell silent for a moment, he would wake instantly and encourage them to shout. There was an echo from across the stream. William liked to listen to it sending back their voices, and he would laugh till he cried to hear the echo of their laughter.

Until the assault of his last illness halted him, William went on tilling the land. He need not have done so. He was well-to-do, considering the time and place, and he might have retired. But there lay the fields, which none of his sons had cared to take over. Long habit made William restless when he thought of those fields running to grass, and so he carried on the chores of his youth as a kind of hobby. Occasionally toward the end, when someone had reproached him for toiling longer than was needful, he would confide in Emma, letting her glimpse the pleasure that his hobby gave him.

What he told her in his old age was the recollection of how, in his prime, he had often been solitary but never alone. Solitary labor used to please him then, for the air was full of familiar noises, all of which he noted and found companionable. When he was at work in the upland fields, the rattle of carts and the voices of children and the ring of scythes or axes came up to him full of

meaning. He labored the earth and was content. And he told her that sometimes back in those days, when the passenger pigeons went north at harrowing time, he would throw down his reins to watch, filled with exaltation and the sense of being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, while the sun was darkened behind a multitude of wings and the spring of the year itself seemed to be moving northward visibly, showing by a sign in the heavens the return of seeding and harvest to the fields. Those, he said, were the best years.

My mood of reverie was broken by pulsating cries from out over the cove. Sea gulls were flocking there as the sun declined, and the fog of late afternoon was creeping into the river from beyond Seabright. It was time for me to go. It seemed odd, though, to be going away hungry from that house, where visitors who came before dinner had always been expected to stay through supper as well, and where a week's visit had been known to last out the summer.

When should I return again? It would be fruitless to speculate about that. I pocketed my notebook with its little budget of needful repairs, locked up, and went out through the lilacs to wait by the roadside for my taxi.

# THE MIRACLE OF LEARNING

BY JAMES L. MURSELL

## I

RECENT years have cast a glamour over the doings of the abnormal mind which I, for one, am constrained to deplore. Ever since Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* set the wild echoes flying, the unconscious, the libido, the censor, suppressed sexual desires, organ inferiority, and sublimation have been words of power and wonder. And for many people psychology has figured as the drama of an uncanny realm of portents, the tale of how

The wild man took his weary way  
To his strange and lonely pump.

All this pageantry and hurly-burly has distracted us from a range of phenomena not only far better attested, but also, I believe, far more truly amazing and deeply significant. These are the everyday phenomena of the learning process. To the discerning eye nothing is more fascinating and marvelous than the way in which the mind advances from weakness to power, from vagueness to precision, from halting clumsiness to refined accuracy, from the limited to the embracing view. Just because these things are so familiar we take them as commonplace. Yet, compared with the combinations of popular psychopathology, they are true drama contrasted with melodrama. In psychology the seemingly commonplace is the truly wonderful. Here, to paraphrase the

saying of Kipling, the true romance indeed 'brings up the five-fifteen' and too often goes 'all unseen.' Whenever we manage to learn anything, no matter how simple or how complex, a miracle has been achieved.

## II

Speak of learning to most people and they think you are talking of something dull and humdrum. They have a vision of some patient creature endlessly repeating a string of digits or a series of nonsense words, or grinding away at a stupid physical coördination. But quite another picture should come before us. The story of Newton and the apple, apocryphal or no, is the archetype of all human learning. A flash of insight coördinates a great mass of material; a new pattern of ideas is born; a crystallization of things held in solution is achieved. Learning is not a routine, but a drama. Archimedes running naked from the bath with shouts of *εὕρηκα* is the type of the successful learner.

We quite wrongly assume that repetition is the key and cause of learning. This is probably the chief reason why we think it humdrum and commonplace. But the process depends on something utterly different — the wooing and incidence of the creative moment, the making of something not there before. Indeed, it should be evi-

dent that repetition cannot in the least explain learning.

Consider how the business starts. You are perhaps — Heaven help you — learning to play golf. You go out on the practice tee with fifty balls and proceed to swat them toward the waiting caddy. How many will go at all where you want to put them? Let us be generous and say ten. Ten successes — forty dubs. If the repetition formula is correct, how do you ever improve your game? Why don't you merely learn to dub, and dub more and more adequately as time goes on?

An experimental problem was set up in the laboratory which could be approached in 1024 different ways. Of these, 1023 were wrong and led to failure; one was right. And yet the right way was learned, and the wrong ways discarded. Ten hundred and twenty-three chances for practice to make imperfect, yet perfection arrived. Why?

A psychologist found that he was developing a persistent bad habit in his typewriting. He constantly wrote 'the' as 'h-t-e.' Being a good behaviorist and a sensible person, he took himself firmly in hand and practised a great many 't-h-e's.' It did no good; still the mistake hung on. Then he had a thought: he deliberately practised 'h-t-e' — and the difficulty evaporated. Practise worked in reverse. He learned the thing he did n't practise. Why?

So far from its being true that we learn by repetition or by doing, repetition is absolutely incapable of accounting for learning. When I start a new piece on the piano I *can't* play it; when I first try to write poetry I find I *can't* write it; when I undertake to drive my initial golf ball I *can't* drive it. The thing is simply not there at all. What sense is there in telling me that I learn to do something by continually doing it when I can't do it anyhow? Con-

sider a child learning to speak English. Can he speak English or not? Yes or no? Clearly no! Then on what is he practising? Surely not on the English language. How could he?

Repetition cannot in the least explain the beginnings of any job of learning, simply because the thing to be learned is always something new, not something already there. No more can it explain the development and continuation of the process. One of the oldest though still among the best experiments on this subject dealt with learning to send and receive the Morse Code on the telegraph instrument. The first job of the pupil was to master the separate letters. This took a long time, but finally he had it. Still for a long while he made no progress. He knew the letters, but the higher speeds and higher masteries were far beyond him. He plodded over an interminable plateau. Then, on a propitious day, he suddenly began to write *words* — whole words all together. Again a long pause in progress — then suddenly entire phrases.

Now notice this — the mastery of the letters grew no better. Far down the line it was already as good as it ever could be. For progress an entirely new integration must come in. Whence did it come? From the letters? How could it? Apparently out of the everywhere!

An enormous amount of our learning shows this mysterious and creative rhythm. The first time I drive a car I glance anxiously hither and yon, and take all sorts of pains with the levers; I stall my engine at the traffic lights, and go in the ditch to avoid another vehicle when there is plenty of room. Later on I notice only a few things in the shifting traffic pattern and am hardly aware of the car's mechanism — and I am fairly safe. The beginning golfer thinks of twenty matters with keen anxiety — and tops the ball.

Bobby Jones steps up with only one thing in his mind's eye, but that one thing perfectly clear, and the ball sails two hundred and fifty yards down the fairway. The wretch 'unaccustomed to public speaking' memorizes every word, forgets half of them, and looks, sounds, and feels subhuman. Lloyd George faces the Limehouse audience with a hundred words roughly jotted on a card, and achieves a triumph. How do these changes come about? What makes us stop being anxious about many things, and fashion a new and more excellent way? Whence this new pattern of attention and behavior?

Of course, in our easy fashion, we say that the routines have become 'automatic,' through repetition. But this misses the whole point. Automatic routines never created first-rate skill. One may know every rule of grammar perfectly without being able to write good style — though style is simply applied grammar. One may be as familiar with the Morse letters as one ever can be, and still remain bad at sending and worse at receiving. Wherever the secret is to be found, it is not here. Macaulay could read a page in the time most of us need for a sentence, but did he know the alphabet better than you or I? Superior controls, more effective patterns of behavior, new directions of the attention, must emerge, or there is no improvement. And, just because these things are brand-new, they cannot be what we are practising.

If repetition were really the key to learning, then the more we repeated anything the better we should learn it. But this is very often not the case. A group of children practised a certain simple skill for eighteen days; then half of them went on practising for seventy-six days longer, after which the others, who in the meantime had done nothing, joined them; and within ten days there was no difference at all be-

tween the two halves of the group. Overlearning persistently refuses to behave in a common-sense way. It is a broken reed, a fickle and dangerous device. The everlasting plodder may be defeating his own ends.

Learning is precisely not the wearing down of a pathway in the nervous system, the repetitive establishment of a routine. So far from being the formation of habit, it requires a breach with established ways of doing and thinking, and the substitution of better ways. Improvement is in the truest and most accurate sense a creative process. Long ago Plato perceived this. How, he asked himself, can anything absolutely new come into our minds? It seems to whenever we learn, whenever we recombine our ideas or improve our skills. He found this impossible, and replied that indeed we never learn anything, but only recollect what is already implicitly known. Here, as so often happens, our most recent science confirms the insight of that profound mind, and we are confronted in this latter day with something amazingly akin to the ancient doctrine of *ἀνάμνησις*.

### III

To invoke Plato's doctrine of reincarnation as an explanation of learning, and to say that whenever we seem to learn a new thing we merely recapture the visions of a previous existence, would certainly strike us as a counsel of scientific despair. But psychology has not yet really done very much better in the way of an ultimate account. Still, one consideration of major importance stands out in recent research: learning appears to be a function of the will.

Two groups were put to work at memorizing the same material. They both made the same number of repetitions. The first group was told to learn with an intent permanently to retain

the material; no such instructions were given to the second. Five minutes after practice, no difference to amount to anything was discernible; both knew the stuff about equally well. Yet a fortnight later the first group showed an indisputable superiority. Once again two groups were put to work at learning. One was stimulated by powerful motives, among them a money reward; the others just drilled. It was found that the first group completed the job in half the number of repetitions required by the latter. A very ingenious experiment was devised in which the subjects had to solve complex puzzles — to learn a type of thinking, that is to say. The crux of success was found to be the presence of a strong determination, a certain dynamic, attacking attitude of mind. It is not plodding, it is not routine, that builds the new structure, apparently out of nothing. Will is the creative force. Without the will to learn there is no learning. And when the will is feeble and confused, learning lags.

Notice that the master key is not the wish but the will to learn. The will must be pointed and organized. We must endeavor not merely to improve in general, but to learn just these things for just this purpose. We must have a clear-cut goal, a limited objective. A bunch of carrots must often be dangled before the donkey's nose.

Frequently we need to hire a teacher to do the dangling. And he earns his pay by choosing the right carrots and dangling them with the proper skill. Whether we put ourselves under another person or do our own teaching, a very large part of the art consists in establishing the proper goals of effort, in showing us what we ought to work for, and how to work for it. Socrates called himself a midwife of ideas, and the task of all worth-while teaching is to hasten and assure the coming of the creative moment of improvement.

Now there are clumsy and stupid and also wise and skillful ways of organizing the will to learn. For instance, it has been experimentally established that to blame the learner for failure, to bully and scold and nag, is thoroughly bad. We know that if a teacher really wishes to direct the dynamics of learning, rather than just to release his own pent-up Uticas, the worst possible thing he can do is to indulge in sarcasm. All such procedures tend to disintegrate, confuse, and stultify the learner's will. They make for chaos, not cosmos; they amount to saying *fiat obscurum* rather than *fiat lux*. The encouragement of success, the appreciation of effort — these are the things that pay. Suspect any teacher who deals habitually in the coin of condemnation; and if you teach with yourself as pupil, do not, as you value your progress, be daunted by failure.

Some curious discoveries have been made concerning the incentives which help learning most. For instance, a great many things are learned most rapidly and surely in the company of other learners rather than alone. This is true not only of physical but also of many mental skills, such as memorizing or solving problems or doing sums. The mere sight of others busy points up the will to learn. Again, one of the surest ways of getting a job of learning well and quickly done is to offer a dime for its completion. Perhaps the ideal school of the future will have a treasury of dimes for inspirational purposes! Hypnotism has been tried as an aid to learning, with uncertain results, though students at Cambridge hypnotized the night before an examination and instructed to remember excelled themselves next day in their papers. Another and more normal way of directing the will is to arrange a situation where we become aware of our success or lack of it. In the good old days of financial drives a common stimulus was the big



thermometer which showed the steady rise of the fund. The same sort of thing should be provided for the learner — a record in which he sees his own progress, and knows whether he is moving, and how fast.

The will to learn seems capable of triumphing over the most astonishing obstacles. It can triumph over fatigue. There is abundant evidence that one can go on and on with the most exacting mental tasks with astonishingly little decline in efficiency. Even after a job of work has become acutely distasteful, it still remains possible to go on doing it well. Indeed, the suggestion has been made in highly responsible quarters that there is no such thing as mental fatigue at all, in the sense of sheer literal inability to produce any more results as a consequence of continuous work. What we usually call mental fatigue is commonly a combination of tired eyes, an aching back, and a violent wish to do something else. When we want to stop we salve our consciences by saying that we can't continue.

Again, the will to learn can triumph over age. Few psychological dogmas have been more easily swallowed than the notion that we learn best when we are young; but it is entirely unsubstantiated by ascertained fact. We assume it to be true, not because we are aware of any proof, but merely because we have been told many times that it is so, and because to believe it comports so well with the besetting laziness and timidity of mankind. On the contrary, however, there is excellent reason to hold that a man of thirty, forty, or even fifty can learn nearly anything better than he could when he was fifteen. To many readers this may seem heresy so violent that I hasten to bulwark myself behind authority. Professor E. L. Thorndike, in his book, *Adult Learning*, has brought together all the investigations ever made on learning at ad-

vanced ages. He finds no scintilla of evidence for the notion that children learn better than adults because of the flexibility of their muscles or the plasticity of their minds. A child of ten can acquire almost any technique better than when he was six. A man in his thirties or forties can acquire almost anything quite as well as he could in his teens — and probably better. This applies even to learning a new language. As far as the psychological processes themselves go, it would be better to attend school between the ages of twenty and thirty-two than between the ages of six and eighteen. The only difficulty would be that of earning a living.

Why, then, do so many adults give up learning new things? Here is the point for our discussion. They stop learning because of a subtle but fatal disintegration of the will to learn. To begin something new at an elementary level seems to them queer, even shameful. The cares of life enmesh them. Or, like E. F. Benson's Lucia, they begin to feel a little *vecchio*. The feeling, not the fact, is the poison. All such resignations, despairs, and distastes are the death of that creative impulse which is the heart of learning. They are not among the inevitabilities of life; we yield ourselves to them 'through the weakness of our own feeble wills.'

The only obstacle which can definitely defeat the will to learn is stupidity. And this is natural enough, because stupidity is the inability to take a situation apart, and to recognize the key logs of the jam. This means an obliteration of all goals, a breakdown of organization. The wish to learn may be strongly felt, but it takes planning and direction to transmute the wish into effective will.

Stupidity not only varies in degree; also it is of many kinds. For instance, there is the specific or limited stupidity which afflicts even the most brilliant. The learning studies have continually

revealed a factor which most of us can recognize only too painfully well in ourselves. This is called 'the persistence of error.' One experiment required learners to disentangle wire puzzles — labyrinths of wire on which hung a key detachable by obscure manipulations. Time and again a worker would get the key up into one corner where it could not possibly be detached, and fumble and twist with the persistence of an insect on a windowpane. Often the director would stop and give aid. He would point out the hopelessness of the blind alley, and suggest that a new plan be tried. The worker would cordially agree, and the director would walk off. Five minutes later he would find the worker back at the old place, knitting his brows, pursing his lips, and sticking to the old error, which he knew to be an error.

This kind of stupidity victimizes all of us. Why do I continually misspell certain words, so that I have an actual vocabulary of spelling errors? Why do I make the same grammatical mistake in Latin again and again? Why can't I see at once what it means to organize a piece of writing? Why did Newton have to wait for inspiration till he saw the apple fall? The answer is our inveterate tendency to get into ruts. So far removed is the essence of learning from becoming routinized that, when this happens to us, learning stops. To continue we have to jolt ourselves out of the rut, to try out alternatives, to overcome a limited and specific stupidity which, like a paralysis, can frustrate and render nugatory the will to learn. To put it otherwise, we are all strongly subject to mental cramp. When the great genius breaks with the past, and achieves a profoundly original and significant regrouping of experience, we exclaim: 'Inspiration!' We should do better to call it learning.

Then there is a more general stupidity, which is the failure to see how a

principle or procedure perfectly well known applies in circumstances that are new and strange. A problem in algebra was given to 1200 people. Simple tests proved that 1000 or more of them knew every operation required to solve it, but only about 300 got the solution. Why? They could not apply what they knew. Is this unusual? Well, try this one on yourself. What are the factors of  $(x-y)$ ? Do you say there are none? This was the answer of a group of graduate students to whom the test was given. But don't you recall that  $(x^2-y^2)=(x+y)(x-y)$ ? So did they. Then why did n't they see that  $(x-y)=(x^{\frac{1}{2}}+y^{\frac{1}{2}})(x^{\frac{1}{2}}-y^{\frac{1}{2}})$ ? Just stupidity — just a failure to see the point.

Then there is universal stupidity, universal limitation. It is said that a monkey cannot learn to unwrap a cord wound twice round a stick. The situation is too complex for him. For us it is simple and obvious. But you and I can never learn to solve at a glance the puzzle of a tangled fishline. Perhaps to a superhuman intelligence that would be as simple as the monkey's problem seems to us.

A colored girl in the sixth grade was given the following problem: 'Joseph rode on a merry-go-round twelve times. Each time cost him three cents. How much did he pay for all his rides?' She utterly failed to solve it. Questioned as to her methods of work, she replied: 'If there are lots of numbers, I adds. If there are only two numbers with lots of parts [digits], I subtracts. But if there are just two numbers and one littler than the other, it is hard; I divides if they come out even, but if they don't, I multiply.' You smile? Perhaps the high gods smile also when you yourself find something a little troublesome with differential equations or the theory of functions. Your wish to learn may vault as high as heaven. Your effective will to learn is limited by the

complexity of the pattern your mind can grasp.

So critically important is the organized, directed will that its regular effect is to diminish, and sometimes greatly to diminish, the amount of effort needed to achieve a goal. Investigation has shown many times that students in school who do the best work also do the least studying. When a girl in college bitterly complains that her roommate works only for a day or two before exams and pulls A's and B's, while she studies till her eyes drop out and can only get C's and D's, she is having quite an ordinary experience. Though she may not know it, she is the victim of one of the common disabilities of human nature. Quality, not quantity, counts. Not the number of repetitions, but the intelligent will, is the crux of learning. In one university 348 students were divided into three groups of decreasing intelligence. The best group had an average mark of 86, and studied 23 hours in a normal week; the next best had a mark of 80, and studied 30 hours; the lowest group had a mark of 76, and studied 49 hours. Surely this reveals much concerning the conditions of human achievement.

#### IV

Learning is a fateful process. There is good reason to hold that, once a person has learned anything, he is permanently and irrevocably changed. We may doubt the dogma of the psychoanalysts that no impression is ever forgotten. It seems too sweeping; universal negatives are hard to prove. But all the facts seem to point away from what I might call the desert-sand theory of learning. This is the view that practice imprints certain traces, and that the moment it ceases the sand begins to drift in, till at last everything is utterly erased.

A certain psychologist memorized a

number of selections of prose and verse. He banished them from his mind, and stowed the clippings away in a file for five years. When he turned his thoughts to them again, he could remember hardly a word. He had a friend read them to him, mixed in with many other selections, and he could not even tell which were the ones he had learned. This seems like almost utter loss. But then he undertook to learn them once again, and he found he could do so in about half the time it had taken him originally. Everything seemed gone, yet something very permanent remained.

Similar results have been obtained with physical skills. When Paderewski returns to the piano after many years, all the world wonders at the reconstitution of his technique. Wonderful, to be sure, yet a marvel familiar enough in the experimental psychology of learning. We often think that swimming and dancing belong to a small group of special skills, because we do not seem to lose them over long intervals without practice. As a matter of fact, this is the rule rather than the exception. The refinements of technique, to be sure, are not immediately there, — this is true also of swimming and dancing, — but the basic adjustment, the basic structure embedded in the personality, which is far more important than the refinements and nuances, remains at our service.

Even when we think at first that we have forgotten something, this may not be the case at all. In a certain experiment the subjects were asked to recite poems learned some time ago. Their efforts were very imperfect. Then they were urged to try hard, to do their best, to reconstruct what seemed lost, to take their time. And more and more was steadily recovered. This may, perhaps, seem rather commonplace, except in so far as an everyday experience is subjected to experi-

mental verification. Yet to the reflective mind such salvagings from some strange limbo have an uncanny look. What is it that we lose? What is it that we keep? Why should the directed will be able to hook so many fish swimming in the psychic depths?

As a matter of fact, what we call forgetting is less an affair of sheer loss than of confusion. Details become mixed; fact and fancy intertwine with one another. The material is not ready on the instant, but apparently it is still there.

One of the most curious features of our mental life is the quantity of undocumented material we carry about with us. We know—or think we know—all sorts of things. Yet of how we came to know them we have not the vestige of an idea. If we were asked to give chapter and verse, we could not do it. A prosecuting attorney would have us very much at his mercy. Still we are perfectly confident, sure that we are right. The fact seems to be that we are capable of learning a great deal incidentally, by just ‘picking it up.’ An experiment was set up in which adult pupils learned a special and complex multiplication table. Some of them memorized the table first, and then did sums with it; others started with the sums, referred to the table for each operation, but never memorized it. These latter came to know and independently to use the table better and with less effort than the former. They had just ‘picked it up.’ They would be quite sure, for instance, that  $7 \times 29$  is 203, but exactly how they had acquired the knowledge they were unaware. A great many of our most valuable items of knowledge and skill are acquired in this way, without documentation or conscious reference—incidentally acquired, that is. The sources of the item are buried in oblivion; the structure of thought and action remains.

If the reader wishes to catch the true feel of the learning process, let him try the following simple and not unprofitable experiment. Let him take a poem of a hundred lines or more. Let him read it through once in the morning and once in the evening, day after day. At first nothing much in the way of learning seems to take place. One reads the poem, and forgets almost all of it. But suddenly there arrives a time when one becomes aware that one knows the poem, that one could start at the beginning and recite along to the end. Contrast this with the businesslike process of learning perfectly ten lines each day. How dutiful and practical it seems! Something attempted, something done, to earn a night’s repose. Yet if one pursues the ten-line method one will learn the poem more slowly and less well than by the procedure which seems utterly unbusinesslike, and which at first appears to yield no results at all. The point is that what we call learning a poem is not grinding it bit by bit into our tissues. Learning the poem means creating it as a living structure in our minds.

## V

The considerations just adduced help us to understand the extraordinary subtlety of the learning process, and its pervasive influence upon human destiny. It is a good many years now since William James, in words of insinuating eloquence, implored teachers to build all learning upon native instinct. To-day the position we would take seems almost the inverse of his. For it appears that most of those impulsive tendencies which seem so much a part of us that we think they must be inborn are indeed the products of learning. Here is no school-bound process, but a force ramifying through all the affairs of life. We learn our hopes and fears, our ambitions and dreads, our

loves and hates, our interests and distastes, and we do it so naturally that we are hardly more aware of what is happening to us than of the beating of our hearts.

Why does one man shine as an executive, another as a salesman, another as a soldier, another as a mathematician, another as a musician? The answer which leaps first to our minds is: Because they were born so. But such a view finds little in psychological investigation to substantiate it. Many a careful search has been made to isolate special innate abilities, but in the main such attempts have drawn blank. What usually emerges is not the difference in the abilities of mathematician, executive, musician, soldier, sailor, tinker, and tailor, but their extraordinary similarity. Great achievement in any field requires just about the same basic equipment. Almost we seem constrained to believe that there is no such thing as innate musical ability, or executive ability, or legal ability, or mathematical ability. Even the great genius seems to be, in the first instance, simply a high-grade human being, capable of developing in many directions, and not in one alone. He gains his special slant through learning, and the fact that he often acquires it very young may be accounted for by the subtle, pervasive, yet conquering power of a will to learn which is often aroused by influences that escape ordinary observation. Versatility, rather

than specialization, is nature's gift to man. Learning cashes the blank check of native versatility in the name of some special achievement; and it may come about so easily and so fast that we call the special achievement the handiwork of nature too.

Yet in a sense we should be right. The products of learning are themselves products of nature. They are not artifacts or tricks. We only think they are when we think of learning as an affair of schoolrooms, dull books, dry routines. When we see a Tilden on the court, a Jones on the green, a Menuhin with his violin, an Einstein solving a problem, an O'Neill writing a play, we are not beholding the artificial tricks of a very superior trained animal. Such virtuosity is a manifestation of human nature at the very topmost peak of realization. Everything works together, perfectly and without impediment. The whole personality is mobilized, integrated, expressing its essential nature in the triumphant act. In learning their skills these men learned to be natural, to be themselves in fullest measure.

Just as plants are shaped and tinted by the soil and climate, so are men moulded by the climate of ideas and expectations in which they live. The process of such shaping is what we call learning. And learning is the familiar miracle which creates out of the raw material of nature the finished product called humanity.



# THE RETURN

BY LORD DUNSANY

CAN you all hear me? I am speaking on the wireless. And I believe that I am in touch with you.

I thought that perhaps you might care to hear a ghost story. An actual personal experience, with nothing secondhand about it. A thing that occurred actually to myself, perhaps the most personal ghost story that any of you may have heard.

Well, to begin with, I was a long way away, when there came over me very suddenly an irresistible feeling to return to the old haunts that I had known a long while ago. I say 'to begin with,' for one must begin somewhere; and my long wanderings, and the remote parts to which I had come, are not much concerned with this tale. Sufficient that I turned at once for home, borne by a longing so strong that it seemed to leave me no choice, and I came in the course of time to that very village whose every chimney I knew. Every path I knew there too, and every little track running off from the paths the width of a single footstep, by which children ran to gardens of their own that they had found or made among weeds; but some of these paths had altered in the long time since I was there. It was a long, long time. The old public house was the same, the Green Man at the corner. And there I drifted, almost aimlessly, and yet with a feeling that there as much as anywhere I might find the life of the old village throbbing away. It was as

I passed over the fields on the way to the Green Man that I first heard people talking about a ghost. I was passing a wheat field, over the stubble, brushing by a line of sheaves, when two men at work there, taking the sheaves away, began to talk of the ghost all of a sudden. 'They say it comes every hundred years,' said one. I knew at once they were speaking about a ghost.

'Yes,' said the other, looking up at the leaves turning with the earliest touch of autumn, 'and it should be about the very day.'

'It is,' said the first; and I heard them say no more, and passed on feeling sure I should hear more at the inn. At the inn I knew none of them, not one; and, where once I thought I did, it was only some old family likeness. So I sat all by myself in a corner beside a curtain and listened to what they said. And, just as I came in, their talk took the same turn as what I had heard in the cornfield. There was a ghost, it seemed, that came to that village once in a hundred years, and the hundred years were up. 'Might be coming soon,' said one, who looked like a gamekeeper.

'Aye, if there's any truth in it,' said a farmer.

'True enough, by all accounts,' said some.

'And there's been a look about the shadows lately,' the keeper said, 'like what my grandmother told me of.'

'Your grandmother?' one of them asked.

'Yes, she saw it,' he said.

'Must have been an old woman,' said a man, looking round from the bar, on which he was leaning.

'Saw it as a child,' said the keeper.

'I would n't walk near the stream to-night,' said another, 'not if any mist was rising. You'd meet it, all damp in the mist.'

I sat there quietly in the shade of the curtain listening to all they said.

'Wonder where it comes from,' said the farmer.

'Ah,' they all said, and shook their heads, and no one even ventured to guess about that.

'Drifts over the fields where it used to walk, I expect, and up to the old house,' said the bartender. 'But as to where it comes from — ah.'

And then their talk died away, as though it were somehow chilled by a draft blowing out of eternity. And when I saw I should get no more of this story from them I slipped quietly out of the room.

Two women were talking on a doorstep as I passed the next house; they seemed to be talking about the price of tea. And suddenly I heard one say: 'It will be about the hundred years.'

'Aye,' said the other one, 'I should n't wonder.' And one of them went inside the house at that, and the other hurried away along the street, and I was all alone once more.

I passed a group of children in the road; and saw from a certain hush that came over their playing, and from the way that a few of them put their heads together and glanced up towards the old house, that they too were talking of the ghost. It left no doubt that that house was the seat of the mystery, and that there these ends of tales one heard in the village would be all gathered together. But when would it be? Was it the hundred years? It hardly seemed

to me that it could be yet. The air seemed somehow not quite sufficiently haunted, though it hardly seems worth telling you so airy a fancy. Partly to see the old village again, and partly to get more facts, if I could, about this tale of the ghost, I hung about the village. I went to the village green. It delighted me to see the calm old space again — altered, but not out of knowledge; and there were geese on it, just as of old. And then a young man and a girl came by, going along a path that slanted across the green, the same path that there had been in my time. And by some strange chance they too, as soon as they came within hearing, began to speak of the end of the hundred years, and that visitor that all of them were expecting. Half believing and half wondering, they passed away out of hearing.

One is moved by impulses more than by reason when one comes to old haunts that one knew. Had reason moved me alone, I should have gone at once to the old house on the hill beyond the village, and satisfied my curiosity there. But stronger than curiosity, stronger than any other emotion within me, I found the lure of the great willows, standing in their strange attitudes by the long-remembered stream. To them I went as evening began to draw in. A white mist rose as I came, and began to creep slowly through fields that sloped to the stream. I went with it, glad of its company, and loitered about those fields whose every boundary was unchanged by even a yard since the days when I knew them. And there the old haystacks stood, dark in the same corners, as though they had never been used since last I saw them; and the mist came up and touched them, and flowed about them, till they stood amongst it like islands. I seemed to know every one of them, not only by their positions, but by the size of them. You see, nothing could ever have hap-

pened in the years since I was there to make each field give more hay, or any less, or to find a better place for the haystack to stand in each field. It was this that made me see, what I already profoundly felt, that I still had my share in this village. Much had changed, but the fundamental things were there as ever. Indeed it could not have been otherwise. And it made me feel more friendly with the mist, with which I was sauntering amongst these remembered nooks, to reflect that it was another of those things that would be in that valley always. Or if it wandered away in the warm weather, carried off by some stray wind, it would return like myself.

Couples walking late, or men traveling lonely, turned now away from the mist, as though they found something ominous in its waving and wandering whiteness; they turned suddenly for the uplands, and we were left quite alone. And I knew they were right to avoid the stream at this hour, for there was a most haunted feeling about it, and that feeling slowly increased as the evening grew stiller and later. Rooks passed, and all the singing birds were asleep. A few wild ducks came over, and circled once, and dropped past me down to their home in a patch of irises; they alone seeming unperturbed by whatever was making the mist so unmistakably eerie. And then a silence fell that nothing disturbed at all, and all the while the eeriness was increasing.

It was like that till the moon rose. But when the moon came huge and yellow and magical and very nearly full, almost with a leap over a ridge of the downland that showed just clear of the osiers, I suddenly knew that the hundred years were up, and that whatever haunted the old house over the meadows, on the opposite side from the moon, would be now on its way if ever. So I left the stream at once and turned for the hill, to see what was to be seen.

I went, all the way, over fields every one of which I had carried so long in my memory that I knew my way unmistakably. Sometimes they differed from the picture of them that I had treasured so long, but only by being a little duller, by shining a little less vividly, as must be the way with heavy solid earth when compared with an old memory. Voices were rising now in the village behind me, as though the large moon coming over the ridges, or the end of the hundred years, had awoken all of a sudden uneasy apprehensions; and not only human voices rose in a hum, but there came sharply through them the outcry of dogs, which clearly shared the vague fear that seemed haunting their masters. The sound of the voices grew low as I moved away from them, but never ceased to fill the night with fear. At what moment the hundred years would end I knew not, but it seemed to me that as the moon rose higher the very last hours of the century were falling away.

I crossed a road, and a couple walking down it paused suddenly and looked up to the old house on the hill. I saw the shape of it, dark, with no windows lit, though now and then the moon flashed curiously upon panes. And this bulk in the night, with flashes upon the windows, I knew for the end of my journey. In this house my life had begun, and to it I returned. It was this house that had called me, through all the length of my wanderings, and that I felt drawing me now, as the Pole draws the needles of magnets. I paid no heed any more to that uneasy hum that came quivering up from voices astir in the village, but left them to whatever troubled them in the mist, and made straight for that house. Far down below me now were the mist and its fears, and the slope of the hill steepened. I swept up it; and just as I came to the edge of the lawns I knew, as I know no other lawns, I found a

high wall before me. They had built it since the days when I knew those lawns. There seemed something about the moon and about the hour that told me not to loiter before this wall, and I pressed on to the house.

The lawns were the same as ever, and all the dew was glittering under the moon, and a hush was heavy upon them, and the house was deep in sleep. Not a sound came from the black bulk of the house, not a movement of door or window, though I had returned to my home from so far and after so long. It stood there black and silent, but the chill and the hush and the darkness of the house were to stop me no more than the wall. I had come from so far to see those lawns again, and the old house standing amongst them. I went round to the door, and the glass which there was in its panels stared blankly at me, with shutters behind them; and all the bolts were locked. There a dog saw me. It had been lying down in a barrel, guarding the door, when it suddenly saw me and howled. But still no sound or movement came from the house.

I knew I was very near to the end of my long journey now, the old wainscot of oak on an upper landing, carved with the curious heads of ancient kings, dark with the years and darkening all the corridor, that ran to the door of a room that was once my nursery. I knew now that this carved oak was the end of my journey. I entered the house, and the dog howled once more. Before me, all in the dark, were the stairs I knew. I needed no light. I knew every turn of those stairs, and every step of them,

and the very flight of the echoes that used to rise from the creak of each different board. I sped up them, and the dog was howling now with one long quivering howl. I came to the landing, and there was the old dark corridor, and there were the ancient heads with their curious faces that seemed to look at me with the first welcome I had had since my long journey began. The howling of the dog, which was louder now, seemed at last to disturb the house, for far away I heard the thudding of footsteps. And the steps were coming towards me.

Can you hear me? I feel that you can. I believe I am near you. A door opened some way off. The steps were nearer. A woman came along the corridor, holding a candle, walking slowly, and looking about her anxiously as she came. And just then clearly out of the tower of the old church of the village the notes of midnight floated over the mist; and it felt to me at that moment that the hundred years were over. And all of a sudden the woman holding the candle saw me. She seemed to see me more clearly than any had done in the village: I noticed that in her eyes as her mouth opened slowly. And then she screamed.

This is a personal experience. Nothing secondhand, as so often there is in such stories. I turned from the woman's white face to the dark of the old carved wainscot, whose every panel and every figure I knew; and, sinking far into that venerable timber, sinking home to the deeps of the oak, I knew that *I* was the ghost.

# CULTURE AND LAISSEZ-FAIRE

BY WILLIAM ORTON

## I

It was big business in seventeenth-century France that coined the slogan *laissez faire*. It was big business in nineteenth-century England that translated the protest against governmental interference into a very profitable policy. And it was big business in twentieth-century America that finally demonstrated the policy's inadequacy. To whatever strange ports we are wafted on the warm breezes of the 'New Deal,' we shall not see the lotus land of *laissez-faire* again. That is probably the major historical fact of our generation.

The notion of letting everyone go his own way, in the comfortable faith that the way he found it profitable to go would coincide 'naturally' with the way he ought, in the general interest, to be going, covered always a mixture of truth and error. For the greater part of a century the former probably outweighed the latter. Modern circumstances, especially in the international field, have reversed the balance. We are now less mindful of the energy and inventiveness that *laissez-faire* let loose in the economic sphere than of the stagnation it imposed on those same faculties in other directions. It provided governments that had forgotten how to govern with the assurance that government was really unnecessary. It allowed interests that had no intention of submitting to control to argue that control was socially undesirable. It enabled a President of the United States, as recently as November

1932, to extol 'the fluidity of the human particles,' as if the architecture of the sand pile were the highest form of engineering he could compass. But since the angle of natural repose fell far short of our reasonable aspirations, other structural principles are now under discussion. Social planning has become the leading indoor sport of parlor Pinks; the 'New Deal' continues to attract a bevy of would-be Culbertsons to Washington. What Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, and even Hitler have said in criticism of *laissez-faire* is receiving careful consideration in the few remaining democracies; and the opposing systems now under construction by the dictators are being closely scrutinized in private even by those who deride them in public.

But the criticism of the dictators does not stop at *laissez-faire* as a political or an economic maxim. It applies also to *laissez-faire* in the sphere of culture. The opposing systems give even less liberty to the writer, the artist, the teacher, the preacher, the broadcaster, the motion-picture producer, than they do to the business man or the factory manager. Not by accident, but by intention; not as a temporary expedient of revolutionary necessity, but as part of a permanent and considered policy.

This aspect of the matter has so far received little serious attention. We all have heard of, and deplored, the restraints on freedom of thought and



expression, on intellectual and artistic independence, that prevail in Italy, Germany, and Russia; and we are gaining not a little from the privilege of playing host to many distinguished exiles from those countries. But that a modern nation should deny the principle, as well as the practice, of liberty in matters of culture seems hardly conceivable to us, save as an act of revolutionary fanaticism. It is in fact much more than this — as the dictators have repeatedly announced; and there is possibly a challenge to our traditions in the cultural sphere no less serious than that to our economic and political pretensions.

## II

There is nothing historically new in the use of authority to bring about like-mindedness. On the contrary, it is the principle of liberty that is new — so new, in fact, as to be still on trial. Never have the agnostic, the heretic, the free lance, had so broad a license as during the past three generations of Western democracy. We are, when we stop to think of it, proud of this fact; though our pride may perhaps be tempered by the reflection that this freedom was partly accidental. It was the by-product of a philosophy which devoted much less attention than formerly to the life of mind, of spirit; which assumed, in practice, that so long as the pursuit of wealth went on energetically and unhampered, what people thought and how they felt were matters of very minor importance. Witness the fact that the one line of thought in which freedom of expression is still uncertain is that which attacks the dominant forms of economic activity. The atheist is a good deal more secure than the communist, because the deity is a minor issue as compared with private property.

We find it difficult, therefore, to understand governments which attach

great importance to homogeneity of thought and ideal. We usually dismiss them with the remark that they are frightened of opposition; to which our intellectuals add that they are manifestly overcompensating for a collective inferiority complex. While there is truth in each of these opinions, it is rather less than half truth; and two half truths do not make a whole truth.

The whole truth goes much deeper. Nations which find themselves in desperate circumstances are called on for an effort of collective will which is possible only under the inspiration of a common faith and a common ideal. The repressive phase of the endeavor is its least significant aspect; what is really remarkable about it is the positive phase, the concentration of psychic energy on the national task. Visitors to Italy, Germany, Russia, whatever their opinions, are impressed with the amount of ozone, so to speak, in the mental atmosphere. These peoples are not cowed; they are resurgent — to use a favorite term of the Nazis. 'It is a feeling — it is an emotion,' said a German business man to an English reporter. 'It is the most wonderful sense of comradeship. And then again it is a reinstatement of self-respect. It is to be again a great nation. Ah, I feel free!'

Liberty is gone, yet there is a curious atmosphere of liberation. Why? Because the dictators have discovered how to put the tremendous forces of collective emotion behind the collective destiny. That — that alone — is the secret of their power. The means they have employed are not new, nor esoteric, nor even very emotional in themselves. Hitler is almost cynically frank about the technique of the achievement. It rests, in every case, on the power of the myth. The myth is the current which fuses mass emotion and mass ideology into unity of purpose.

Well, we too had our myths during the war, when it was important for us all to act together. The only difference is that our myths were by comparison very inferior ones. We invented the 'Hun' (subsequently we invented the 'Red') very much as Hitler has invented the 'Jew'; but he was not quite so useful a devil, because, for a practical, usable myth, he was really a little too mythical. Then, as the positive pole of our magnetic field, we invented the 'war to end war'; which again was not as effective as it might have been, since many of us in our hearts did not, and do not, want to end war. Finally, we decided to 'make the world safe for democracy,' without ever being able to convince ourselves either that democracy could be made safe for the world or that the world would be much better if it were. We put the same kind of tactics behind our myth making (including the repressions) that the dictators have put behind theirs; but our myths were not adequate to the occasion, which was altogether too big for them.

And our myths had the further defect of lacking their proper ritual or symbolism. The only symbols we could rake up were our poor little national flags, which suggest division rather than unity, and our thin little national tunes, which we played till we were sick of the sound of them. If only we could have founded a League of Nations at the same time as we established unity of command, and given that a flag, a tune, and a ritual — then we might have achieved something, with all our effort, better than six million dead and the ruin of Europe.

Myths are curious things. They become true by being believed in. The grain of fact that is in all of them has little to do with their final form or function; but, being planted in a certain psychological soil, it produces truths of remarkable efficacy. That

soil is the subconscious yearning for a centre of common aspiration; and the resulting truth is of the same order as that which the lover knows of his beloved. It is true for the believer, in that new evidence is continually forthcoming, and that it leads to results which harmonize admirably with the rest of his experience. Of course they do, since all his experience is colored by the need which the myth objectifies. But inasmuch as it focuses and energizes action, leading to results which would otherwise be impossible, it is there for us all to reckon with. Hitler's 'pure Aryanism,' Mussolini's Cæsarism, Stalin's Marxism — the more they are believed in, the truer they become, proving their truth by results which accord with the hopes and expectations of their believers. To truth of such importance the claims of freedom and rationality appear justly subordinate.

### III

The trouble with this sort of truth, as with every sort of pragmatic affirmation, is its local and limited quality. When it comes into conflict with other people's truth, there is nothing left to appeal to — save force. That is why a purely pragmatic policy of nation building is essentially a warlike policy. But in the short run a policy which uses the power of the myth in preference to the appeal to reason, and silences doubt by emotion rather than by argument, offers tremendous advantages. It opens a short cut — short though bloody — to national unity. By harnessing collective emotion, via the myth, to collective effort, it attains a collective strength seldom reached by democratic societies. And it furnishes a sense of the absolute value of the corporate life that democracies, to judge by their disintegrative tendencies, lack. We who reject such a policy must realize what we are up against.

But we do reject it. Take a key issue. A few years ago there was a sharp skirmish between the American Legion and the intellectuals about the writing of school history textbooks. The Legion considered that many of the books in use showed a deplorable lack of respect for some of the famous figures in the American past, and indicated pretty plainly its opinion that the teaching of history should inculcate a belief in the unique excellence of the American nation. The intellectuals expressed themselves as horrified with the bias displayed in certain texts dear to local school committees, and endorsed such books as those of Dr. Beard which resolutely prefer truth to nationalism. So far as one could judge, the public was with the intellectuals — certainly the teachers were.

Now in Russia, Germany, and Italy school histories are all being rewritten from the point of view of the dominant national myth; and there is very little protest. Russian children now imbibe a history which shows the wickedness of capitalism, the folly of religion, and the adequacy of historical materialism as a clue to everything. Italian children learn the continuity of modern Italy with imperial Rome, and regard Mussolini as the natural successor to the Cæsars. German children, freed from the 'corrupting influence' of liberalism, are being taught the racial theory of history, with devotion to the state and the army as the prime objective, and a strong dash of irredentism to give it all a kick.

Could a majority of voters in any state or city of the Union be found to endorse such a policy? I doubt it. The American tradition, exceptions notwithstanding, is that matters of culture are not to be made subject to political expediency. We believe, taking us by and large, that our democracy is strong enough to stand for truth and freedom and still achieve a sufficient unity of

will and idea. But, in believing that, we are setting ourselves a much more difficult challenge than we realize.

The United States, not less than Germany and Italy, is entering upon a drastic reconstruction of its collective life in which issues of the most fundamental character will be raised. What has happened so far is a mere scouting expedition. The process may take a couple of decades, or it may be catastrophic; in either case, the relations of the various sections and the various economic groups to one another will be profoundly altered, and the centre of gravity will undergo a noticeable shift. If the transition is not marked by civil disorder on an unprecedented scale, we shall be extraordinarily lucky. The drift toward violence has been very marked in recent years, and if we are compelled to adopt either Fascism or revolutionary communism, both of which have to maintain themselves by force, the outcome will be much more sanguinary than in Europe.

That prospect can be averted only by a surpassing readiness of all interests to put the commonweal ahead of their particular doctrines and advantages; and the challenge is coming, very speedily, in quite specific and material forms. We have to ask ourselves whether the practice of laissez-faire in cultural matters is giving us a collective morale high enough to stand the strain of the coming crisis. And we have to recognize that at present there are powerful groups within the community whose devotion to the common good is not strong enough to call forth voluntarily the sacrifices that are going to be demanded from them. External war may present a psychologically tempting distraction from the internal strain; and a pretext for it may not be undiscoverable, since within the next few years the United States will be compelled to assume a definite attitude, one way or another, toward its

international responsibilities. Can we, consistently with the principle of liberty in education and culture, attain such an intelligent harmony of will and idea as will preserve us from becoming enemies of one another and a menace to our neighbors? That is the ultimate challenge to *laissez-faire*.

## IV

If we fail, the penalty will be very heavy. It will involve, among other things, the disappearance of the form of government and the kind of liberty to which we have grown accustomed. But, if we are to succeed, one prerequisite is evident: we must foster intelligence and the power of the reason as energetically as the dictatorships foster emotion and the power of the myth.

And at once an ominous fact strikes one. Of all the popular objects of attack in time of depression, public education seems to be the most popular and the most defenseless. Business men who would admit that the social stability of the United States depends on the intelligence of the average citizen are everywhere acting as if education were the least essential of all the public services. Citizens' committees, taxpayers' leagues, municipal research bureaus, and chambers of commerce up and down the country have been heading the attack on the public schools, using as their chief weapon their private influence on the bankers, who have now, in many cases, the last word in municipal policy; and they have the support of the most widely circulating propaganda sheet in the country — the *Saturday Evening Post*. Salaries have been cut (where they are still paid) to levels below their 1914 purchasing power; staffs have been depleted to a degree which makes a class of less than forty children a rare phenomenon; and the teacher has been made to feel as if he were receiving an

unmerited privilege from the community in being allowed to teach at all.

Well might a Chicago teacher exclaim, in January 1933, 'How are we teachers to teach civics under present circumstances? Are we to admit that popular government has collapsed, as well as private industry? We are given to understand as teachers that we are further to be offered up as a sacrifice to the financial powers. The schools are easy to attack, though we have found it desperately hard to keep them open through eight long payless months. Do the people, the common people, really want their schools?'

There are, — or were, — no doubt, certain economies that could be made in the educational system without impairing its efficiency; but it takes experts, not bankers or politicians, to make them. And, on the other hand, the average level of public-school salaries, even before the depression, was too low to attract a sufficient supply of the right kind of talent, especially among men. In a dictatorship, this would not so much matter. When we hear of the wholesale mutilation of the educational system in Germany, of the virtual extinction of the progressive school movement, of the reckless sacrifice of intellectual ability to political fanaticism, we deplore it, but we recognize it as all of a piece with the type of society Germany is creating. A dictatorship, whether of one man or one party, does not need to rely upon the free intelligence of its citizenry. But a democracy does. Whether we realize it or not, the maintenance of the highest possible level of public education is an integral part of the American theory of government; and it is both better and safer that occasional waste or extravagance should be condoned than that efficiency should be in any measure impaired — especially in time of crisis.

Therefore, if federal aid is called for, it should be at least as freely forth-

coming as it has been to insolvent railroads and corrupt banking institutions. Further, from the point of view of economic policy, the case for federal aid to education is at least as strong as the case for general 'public works.' Of all possible public works, education is the most deserving; and if the government really desires to get more purchasing power into circulation, the needs of the teachers — which are also largely those of the children — are entitled to immediate consideration.

There is undoubtedly a problem here about which even professional opinion is divided. If the use of federal funds is to be invoked to relieve the present appalling emergency in the educational system, will there not arise a real danger of regimentation from above in respect of the educational programme? It is this prospect which has given pause to many in control of educational institutions whose needs are desperate. On the other hand, a survey of the composition of the school committees in the vast majority of the smaller towns suggests that some measure of centralization in control might be desirable for the improvement in personnel and policy that it could bring. In view of the inadequate state of organization and representation among teachers themselves, there can be no easy solution; but it seems to the present writer that the need for rescue work is so urgent as to warrant taking a certain risk in regard to local autonomy. The local communities owe it to the nation to live up to the responsibility that is entrusted to them. If they fail — for whatever reason — to do so, the nation cannot afford to regard the situation with indifference.

## V

When we turn from the education of the child to that of the adult, we encounter another paradox. It has been

officially stated that the present German government does not favor the extension of education among the people, especially among women. The *Volkshochschulen*, and other institutions for adults of more or less liberal character, have been closed, and even the book trade now exists largely on Nazi sufferance. The independent theatre, with its tremendous educational value, is a thing of the past. 'We demand,' says Article 23 of the official Nazi programme, 'laws against tendencies in art and literature which have a bad influence on our life as a people, and the closing of institutions which conflict with this demand.' The demand is being fulfilled even in advance of the laws. Modernist art is taboo, exhibitions have been forcibly closed, art organizations compelled to adopt the Nazi creed or dissolve. The entire motion-picture industry — 'purged' of its finest talent — is now reorganized 'under the protection of the national government' and entering on a new production programme according to the ideas of Dr. Goebbels. The propagandist control of broadcasting has forced itself into international prominence.

In short, there is no longer any sphere in which the opportunity for free cultural development is open to citizens of the 'third Reich.'

Well, that is one way of striving for an effective consensus of opinion. To us it seems an appalling way, and not worth the price, even if it succeeds; we stand committed to an opposite course. But we cannot be said to be pursuing our own course as if we really believed in it, although success is just as important to us as it is to the Germans. The culture of the adult citizen is a matter which the United States has never yet taken seriously.

Adult education, for example, outside of some two or three progressive states, has received not one quarter the



attention given it in other democracies; and the use of the radio has been left exclusively, save for some 4 per cent of total facilities, to the control of commercial interests. Out of ninety-five educational broadcasting stations licensed since February 1927, forty-four were surviving at the beginning of 1932, and several of these have since succumbed to the difficulties of their position. For all practical purposes, educational or cultural use of the radio depends entirely on the generosity of the commercial broadcasters. Partly on their own account, partly at the instigation of private social agencies, the principal broadcasters have given more of their facilities to disinterested uses than was expected a few years ago, and they are entitled to ample recognition of the fact. But, even if they were perfect Galahads, they are in business primarily to make money; their personnel, their organization, and their policy are all subject to this consideration.

An adequate social use of broadcasting in America is very far off indeed. Yet the cultural possibilities of this medium are so great — as the British have demonstrated — that no nation may neglect them with impunity; and an exclusively commercial control involves not only neglect of these possibilities, but certain kinds of positive damage to society.

Has it ever occurred to critics of the Nazi régime that the everlasting sales talk of American broadcasting constitutes a propaganda in favor of money making that is even more insistent, and more nauseating, than propaganda for a given political system? On behalf of the German, the Italian, and the Russian controls, it can at least be said that in forcing the attention of the listener to issues of national concern they compel him to a measure of disinterestedness in his personal outlook, and relegate the question of petty

economic gain to a subordinate place in the collective ideology. That is no small advantage; it may turn out, in the matter of public morale, a decisive advantage over a system which devotes its major energies, Sundays and weekdays alike, by both precept and example, to the national sport of dollar chasing. If I am to be compelled to listen to propaganda over the radio, I would rather, on the whole, it were for a national ideal than for the patent-medicine proprietor and others of his tribe.

A second type of social cost is perhaps inevitably incurred by the mechanization of sound, so that the question becomes one of compensating advantage. American broadcasting consists of about 86 per cent music (of a sort). This fact, in conjunction with the mechanization of the motion-picture theatre, is rapidly reducing the American public to a passive, chair-sitting mass, incapable of doing anything for itself, and 'fed up' with far more inactive recreation than is good for it. The American Society of Composers has produced figures to show that total sales of sheet music have fallen off 75 per cent in the past few years. An outstanding 'song hit' stales so quickly through incessant mechanical repetition that its sales now reach only about one fifth of their former volume, while employment of musicians in motion-picture theatres dropped from 19,000 in 1925 to about 3000 in 1932.

Much of this change is, no doubt, inevitable, and some of it, no doubt, represents a gain in the quality of what is actually heard. No one would contend, however, that the reduction to passivity of the general public is in itself a good thing; and we are entitled to ask the industries that bring it about what positive contributions to the national culture they can show to offset the loss of any active concern with the art of music in thousands of humble

homes. They will reply, if they are honest, that considerations of national culture are necessarily a very distant second in their calculations to considerations arising from their profit-and-loss accounts.

## VI

The truth is that a people whose cultural interests are almost entirely in the hands of the profit seekers is in no position to sneer at a people whose cultural interests are under the domination of a political group. Which is the more likely — that the profit system will place in control people who care little about profits, or that the dictatorships will eventually produce people who care less for politics than they do for culture? Consider the motion-picture industry: Is the Marxism of the Russian film, the 'pure Germanism' that is in future to inspire the German film, the melodramatic nationalism encouraged by the Italian directorate, any lower in the scale of values than the crude mass appetites to which, for purely financial reasons, the majority of American films cater? Russians, Germans, Italians, and a good many Americans, do not seem to think so. The question is open.

It may be argued on behalf of the laissez-faire attitude toward matters of culture that at any rate the possibility of change is not arbitrarily blocked, and that change may mean progress. It may; but there is no assurance that it will; and if laissez-faire is to mean in this sphere, as in others, the sole supremacy of private profit seeking, there is every probability that it will not. Freedom is an excellent thing, most excellent of all in matters of culture; but a system in which all cultural advance is conditioned by its ability to show financial profits is not in fact a free system, and special forms of com-

munity effort and organization may be a necessary prerequisite to freedom.

What precise forms such effort should take is a matter requiring careful consideration in the immediate future. For the past three or four years citizen organizations have been at work on these problems in respect of adult education, broadcasting, and the motion-picture business; but so far there is nothing that can be called a consensus of opinion. The area of agreement is little more than a general sentiment that matters cannot be left to take care of themselves. That, however, may prove a good starting ground if it can be extended. What is now needed is a wider public recognition of the existence of the cultural problem. Laissez-faire democracy has received a sharp challenge in this sphere as it has in others; and a government which relies, in the last resort, on the intelligence and the morale of the free citizen can no more afford a policy of drift in matters of culture than it can in matters of economics.

It remains to be seen whether, in the difficult times that lie ahead, the government of the United States can secure through voluntary loyalty the same preference of the common good to individual gain that other powers now foster by dictatorial methods. Considerable groups of Americans already affirm that it cannot, that the issue will have to be fought out. To avert that failure of reason and good will, the national government must endeavor to deserve the loyalty of its citizens in a measure exceeding the call of either party or profit. It cannot do this by an exclusive devotion to economic ends, whether of individuals, corporations, or the state itself. An active concern for economic justice is undoubtedly the first step. An active concern for the culture of its citizens is the equally essential second.

# THE PROFESSOR GOES TO LUNCH

BY WALTER PRICHARD EATON

THE chimes in the memorial tower almost overhead suddenly began to jangle, their metallic voices flooding the old classroom, which had to be ventilated by opening the windows. Thirty pairs of feet scuffled, and the professor's voice faded away. Noon — the hour was over. No more nineteenth-century prose that day. Twenty-nine pairs of feet carried their owners noisily out the door and down the stairs. One boy remained, addressing the professor, who was gathering two or three books and several sheets of yellowed notes into a brief case.

'Sir, I had to go home last week because my mother was sick, and I could n't get that report on Newman done. I wonder if you'd —'

'See the Dean's office,' said the professor sharply.

'Yes, sir, but —'

The professor drew the zipper around his case and looked at the youth before him.

'I trust your mother is out of danger,' he said.

'Oh, yes, sir, she —'

'Don't you like Newman?'

'Well, I guess so. He's —'

'You guess so? Have you tried him?'

The boy met the professor's eye. His expression changed.

'Yes, sir,' he replied. 'I tried. I guess he's not up my alley, sir.'

'I guess very likely he's not,' said the professor with faint emphasis on the *guess*. 'But I guess you'd better invite

him up before next Tuesday and have a good long session.'

'Yes, sir. Thank you.'

The boy shuffled away on dirty rubber-soled shoes and the professor slowly followed. Thirty students. Fifteen years ago there had been ninety-five. But that was before the new interest in the 'social sciences' — 'sciences,' rubbish! After all, Charlie Benton's course in Chaucer was down to twelve. He was n't the only one to suffer. Suffer? How much did he really care except as a matter of silly personal vanity? And what difference did it make? Why should any boy read Newman? What place is there for Newman in this day and age?

A passage came into his head as he emerged upon the campus. 'Many a more fruitful coast or isle is washed by the blue Ægean, many is the spot more beautiful or sublime to see, many the territory more ample; but there was one charm in Attica which in the same perfection was nowhere else. . . .' Yes, that was the way it began, exactly. And that charm? How did it go? 'The special purity, elasticity, clearness and salubrity of the air of Attica. . . .' Then came the beautiful passage about what the English business man would not have reported — the tender tints on the marbles, the fragrance of the hill-sides, the shiver and break of the white spray along the shore. . . .

The professor repeated what further phrases he could remember, slowly to

himself, savoring their rhythm with an abstracted inward ear.

The day was dank and gray and warm. Stale, dirty snow was melting under the campus trees, and the crosswalks — which, like campus walks everywhere, made no definite design, but had been forced to obey the human instinct for a short cut — were fouled with dirty puddles. From behind the enclosing buildings came the roar of city traffic. At one side there was a wide gap, and through it, across the city street, he could see the Gothic pile of a new building, a building which had cost millions, to house the students in a luxury of carved oak and tiled shower baths and vaulted dining halls. The street was foul with oily slush, lined with parked motor cars, and through it passed a ceaseless stream of trucks, trolley cars, buses, and pedestrians.

‘Washed by the blue Ægean’ — quaint ideas Newman had for the site of a university!

The professor had been a student in this college, how many — good God, forty years ago! No piles of scholastic Gothic then, but only this older campus, with fewer buildings. Did n’t know then they were ugly. Maybe they’re not. The snow used to stay clean, too. There were n’t any motor cars. A few horses cloppity-clopping past. He could remember hearing them at night, as he studied — as he read Newman, and Ruskin, and Carlyle, and Arnold, and Pater. Pater — odd how phrases linger, and the memory of your first meeting with them. He and Joe Ellis, in those far-off days, were striving for ‘style,’ because ‘style’ was what landed you on the *Literary Monthly* board. One day Joe had rushed into his room, brandishing a book (it was bound in red, he recalled). ‘Listen, Bob, listen! It’s great! “The presence which thus rose so strangely beside the waters . . .”’ A purple passage? Maybe. He often said so. He scoffed at

it, perhaps in unconscious deference to the bored expressions on his students’ faces as they listened — or pretended to. But what a grand, rich, satisfying color purple once had been! A royal color. Royal! Now we are making prose safe for democracy.

The professor, on that reflection, stepped over a puddle of slush with a certain alacrity. Not bad, not bad.

Students were streaming past him on their way from classes, or to lunch. Most of them wore dirty white summer shoes and no hats. Many wore light-colored overcoats dirtier than the shoes. It was the fad to be badly dressed. Collegiate — only they would choke before they’d use that word. But they could n’t have thought of any other.

The professor passed from the old campus to the street, and was caught in a current of boys and girls swarming down the sidewalk from a near-by public high school. They were shrill and aggressive, with hard little faces, and not one of them, of either sex, yielded any place to the spare, elderly man with the brief case, who breasted his way as best he might against their current. Their shrillness, their unattractiveness, the crude, harsh inflections of their speech, their endless numbers, made him faintly ill.

He turned in presently under a pseudo-Gothic arch, and found himself in a small quadrangle out of the Middle Ages. Stone walls mellowed by acid rose around him, full of windows with tiny leaded panes of glass expensively full of defects. Above the gabled roofs of many-colored slate rose towers and battlements. One sash of a fourth-story window stood open, and as the professor entered the quadrangle five or six boys on the ground were busily endeavoring to throw a snowball into the room behind. The stone wall around the window was peppered with white dots. At last two shots took effect. The first

went through the opening, and there came down the sound of a faint crash.

'Wheel!' cried the marksman. 'Got something that time.'

The second shot, with a soggy snow-ball, caught a leaded pane full in the centre, and there was the tinkle of broken glass, so dear to the ears of the young.

'Jeez,' said the thrower, 'let's go eat!'

The youths sprang upon the flagstone walk, and, swinging neatly past the professor, dashed for the dining-room door, which the last one let slam almost in his face.

The professor, hanging his wraps in a far corner of the coatroom, could overhear snatches of conversation.

'... a case of the stuff? Oh, feller!'

'Old Johnny was good this morning. You oughta got up. Took the NRA for a ride. And how!'

'... and did we blow *him* a raspberry!'

'So what?'

He passed through this jargon, and through the pine-paneled commons room (why Georgian pine paneling in a Gothic building, he wondered, as always when it caught his eye) to the high-vaulted dining room, with its elaborate and beautiful oak carving, its expensively silent oak plank floor, its stately windows looking out on the large quad, and its scores of tables where boys were energetically eating. He was one of the faculty privileged to eat here — or, rather, he was supposed to eat here so that the students could have the privilege of sitting with him. So far, few of them had shown any inclination to avail themselves of the privilege. He hoped they would continue thus indifferent. Why should they wish to sit with him? Or he with them? Familiar as he was with them, he saw them suddenly as a race apart. They were separated from him, at any rate, by a great barrier of time. He

might know their world, or as much of it as he cared to, but he was not of it. They did not even know his. They could never know his. His world shaped him when he was their age — forty years ago. These boys never knew a world in which there were no motor cars, no movies, no radio. Radio — he smiled again at the excuse offered in all honesty by one of his students to explain his failure to prepare a lesson. The boy said his radio broke down and he couldn't study. But it was a crooked smile, for the professor had believed him. The raucous and habitual noise suddenly shut off, a silence descended on that boy, not blessed but paralyzing.

Thou still unravished bride of Quietness,  
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time . . .

It was his day for calling up quotations from the well of memory — a silly trick, but oddly comforting, like soft music.

He cast his eye down the ranks of tables, looking for one where some faculty member approximately of his age might be seated. Harry Boynton was in a far corner by himself, sardonically contemplating a plate of salad. The professor drew near and took the place opposite. Boynton looked up, nodded, and remarked: —

'It is a curious fact that dressing improves a salad almost as much as a woman. I call this salad distinctly dowdy.'

'When we were young we ate sugar on our lettuce,' said the professor.

'And wore woolen drawers,' said the other. 'Undoubtedly civilization is advancing.'

'Harry, you teach composition —'

'I call it that on warm spring days when vacation is approaching and my invincible optimism is reborn.'

'Well, you give a course in it. What writers do your boys imitate?'

'Oh, Caldwell, of course. It used to



be Hemingway, but he's distinctly old fogey now.'

'That's unfortunate. I was just catching up to him. Should I skip him and tackle this — what is it — Caldwell?'

'I would n't if I were you,' said Boynton. 'Wait a bit and then you can skip him too.'

'And then I can wait some more, and skip the next one?'

'Exactly. You can go skipping through modern literature with a light heart. Your field is the nineteenth century.'

'That's not my field, it's my home.'

Something in the professor's voice made his colleague look up from the scantily dressed salad at which he was pecking.

'Don't let it get you, Bob,' he said.

'Let what get me?'

'Call it the weather. I always do.'

'Are you an expatriate, too, Harry?'

'And that means?'

'That means living in a land of aliens. Expatriates in Time, that's what we are — or I am. Oh, I can talk on Pater and Newman historically, and set papers and give examinations. But why do that? What good is it? It's their mood, their ideas, their music, which gave me something more than the thin barley-water blood of "scholarship"! Bah, sometimes I hate the very word! I can't make them rekindle in this age the fires they kindled in mine. Newman, a boy just told me, is n't up his alley.'

'And Caldwell is n't up yours.'

'So what?' the professor quoted grimly.

'So I think we might take a walk this afternoon, out where the pavement ends. You would n't get that

allusion, Bob, but never mind. There's a lot of clean snow up Newcastle way, and we'll dig old Cobalt McFee out of his studio to give us tea — or something. It's generally something. Remember how he always said Ruskin could n't write and Pater was a pansy?'

'And you think that will cheer me up?'

'It ought to. It'll make you mad.'

'You're a decent old idiot,' said the professor. 'I'll pick you up at three if I can get my papers corrected.'

Boynton left, and presently the professor finished his dessert of two pale canned apricots, lit a pipe, and followed him. A watery sun was trying to break through the gray mist. Unabated, the stream of traffic was grinding down the sloppy street. A fire-engine siren shrieked on the next block. A motor van went by, covered with lurid posters for a motion picture and making the air hideous with the blast of a loud speaker. From a parked car beside the curb came the harsh, mechanical voice of a radio, to which the girl and the two boys crowded on the front seat were paying no attention. The shrill stream of high-school children was bearing down upon the professor as they returned for their afternoon session. Or was it a different lot? Who could tell? They all looked alike. And so many — so many!

"Jeez, Babe," I says, "can that stuff . . ."

'Washed by the blue Ægean . . . Thou still unravished bride of Quietness . . .'

The professor hurried into his office and shut the door. There was silence, and loneliness. He sank into his battered armchair and closed his eyes wearily.

# THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

## THE GENTLEMAN IN HISTORY

[MR. SEDGWICK'S disquieting papers have led many of the *Atlantic's* friends to suggest that the Gentleman whose demise he so engagingly deplores was rather a rich and fragrant compound of superficial excellencies, technical proficiencies, and social graces than the expositor of dignity in one's self, consideration for others, and a certain peculiar, not unnoticeable, elevation of character. With these thoughts in mind our readers may care to glance over a few definitions which the past has given of 'God Almighty's Gentlemen.'

— THE EDITOR]

Τὸ φρόνιμον εὐγένεια καὶ τὸ συνετὸν φ  
θεὸς δίδωσιν, οὐχ ὁ πλοῦτος.

(Good sense and understanding, gifts of  
God,

Not riches, make true gentlehood.)

— EURIPIDES, *Alexandrian Fragments*

Ὅς ἀν εὖ γεγονὼς ᾗ τῇ φύσει πρὸς τ'ἀγαθὰ  
Κἀν Αἰθιοψ ᾗ, μῆτερ, ἔστιν εὐγενής.

(Whoe'er by nature's well-disposed towards  
good,

Negro though he be, a gentleman is he.)

— MENANDER

*Licet superbus ambules pecunia  
Fortuna non mutat genus.*

(Though high you hold your head with  
pride of purse,

'T is not the fortune makes the gentleman.)

— HORACE, *Epodes*

*Quis est generosus? Ad virtutem bene a  
natura compositus. Non facit nobilem atrium  
plenum fumosis imaginibus. . . . Animus  
facit nobilem; cui ex quacumque conditione  
supra fortunam licet surgere.*

(Who is a gentleman? One naturally well  
disposed towards virtue. It is not a gallery  
filled with dusty portraits that makes a  
gentleman, but the spirit which may rise  
above fortune out of any condition of life.)

— SENECA, *Epistles*

*Un gentilhomme qui vit mal est un monstre  
dans la nature . . . la vertu est le premier  
titre de noblesse.*

(A gentleman who leads a bad life is a  
monster in nature . . . virtue is the first  
title to nobility.)

— MOLIÈRE, *Don Juan*

Trauthe, pettee, fredome, and hardynesse

Off thisse virtues iijj who lakkyth iij,  
He ought never gentylmane called to be.

— PERCY'S *Reliques*

Loke who that is most vertuous alway,  
Prive and apert, and most entendeth ay  
To do the gentil dedes that he can,  
And take him for the gretest gentilman.

— CHAUCER, *The Wif of Bathes Tale*

A soft, meeke, patient, humble, tranquil  
spirit;

The first true Gentleman that ever breath'd.

— DEKKER, *The Honest Whore*

. . . We are gentlemen

That neither in our hearts nor outward eyes  
Envy the great, nor do the low despise.

— SHAKESPEARE, *Pericles*

Old story of James II, who, petitioned to  
make an old woman's son a gentleman,  
replied: 'I could make him a nobleman, but  
God Almighty could not make him a  
gentleman.'

Bright thoughts, clear Deeds, Con-  
stancy, Fidelity, Bounty, and generous  
Honesty are the Gems of noble Minds:  
wherein (to derogate from none) the true  
Heroick English Gentleman hath no Peer.  
— SIR THOMAS BROWNE, *Christian Morals*

You know how essential strict honour is  
to the character of a gentleman, as well as  
to the quiet of his mind. — LORD CHESTER-  
FIELD, *Letters to His God-son*

A blackguard is a fellow who does not care whom he offends; a clown is a block-head who does not know whom he offends; a gentleman is one who understands and shows every mark of deference to the claims of self-love in others, and exacts it in return from them. — HAZLITT, *Table Talk*

It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain.

— NEWMAN

'What is a gentleman?' It is to be honest, to be gentle, to be generous, to be brave, to be wise; and possessed of all these qualities to exercise them in the most graceful manner. — THACKERAY

### IN MEMORIAM

#### THE OLD BROWN HEN

[WHAT reader of the *Atlantic* has forgotten that story of Captain Hall, 'Sing: A Song of Sixpence,' which had for its delectable heroine the old brown hen? — THE EDITOR]

THE bells of Papeari toll;  
Chime in the bells of Arué;  
Let them, as they can, console  
Those who mourn this mournful day:  
The old brown hen has passed away.

'Nonsense!' you exclaim; 'Absurd!  
Because an old brown hen is dead  
Shall bells be rung?' My friend, one word:  
Not 'an' but 'the' old hen, I said.

The old brown hen: the Skipper's, mine;  
Our friend of twelve or thirteen years.  
You, if you wish to, may decline  
To mingle with our own your tears;

But he who gave her length of days,  
And he who sang her fame in 'Sing,'  
Their handkerchiefs shall jointly raise,  
And, having wet them, jointly wring.

If all the eggs that she has laid,  
Since twenty-three, were stacked on high,  
The topmost egg would cast its shade  
Upon the peak of Aorai.

These eggs, in one sole omelet,  
Had fed Great Britain's unemployed;

And when they'd et their fill, there yet  
Had been enough to be enjoyed

By all the workless, foodless wights  
In all the sad United States,  
However keen their appetites,  
However large and deep their plates.

But I do wrong to value her  
In such a common graphic way,  
For she surpassed in character  
All the hens that merely lay.

And character is never seen  
In better light than at the end.  
She died as she had lived, serene,  
Brave to the last, our honored friend.

Farewell, old, brown, and noble hen!  
Peace to thy dust forevermore!  
We shall not see thy like again  
On Motu Ovini's sandy shore.

JAMES NORMAN HALL

### A WRITER'S FRIENDS

'WOULDN'T you like me to drive you about?' asked a charming girl whom I met at a tea not long since in a little town to which I had just come. 'You'd find such interesting things to write about.'

What a familiar ring the question had! A writer's friends, even his chance acquaintances, seem bent on helping provide that literary material which apparently they feel is his prime need. There are those, too, among my intimate friends, who go so far as to advise me on what class of writing they think I should do well to adhere to. My friend Olympia, who herself has never written a line more serious than 'The bird on Auntie's hat,' confides that she has little hope of a play of mine which is tossing about among the theatrical managers in New York. 'The subject,' says Olympia, 'is unpopular,' and she proceeds to take me to task for not sticking to a previous field into which I had ventured, one in which, Olympia believes, I 'have a better chance.'

All this kind interest in my work is the more surprising in that, so far as I can recall, I have never asked for even the slightest aid or advice of the sort that is proffered.

It is possible that I should have profited by doing so. Be that as it may, I can only wonder if other writers, at any rate those who live, as I do, quite outside a literary milieu, are subject to a similar solicitude.

There is another thing, also, that must afflict to some degree everyone who writes, or at least who writes fiction. It is the claim one's acquaintances make to be able to identify characters and localities one has depicted. We may try to forestall this evil by having inserted at the start of a novel, 'The characters in this book do not represent any living persons.' But it is all the same. They pounce on one after another, and no insistence on the writer's part that the tags are wrong has an atom's weight in changing their opinion.

A lady leans across the table at a luncheon with a slightly truculent air, though plainly she is not altogether displeased: 'I see you have my father in your new novel.' The only resemblance I myself can discern between the lady's father and the character in question is a similarly luxuriant crop of white hair and the somewhat important manner from which neither is entirely free. The people in a certain small town where I lived for a brief time still declare that the scene of a story I wrote while I was among them was their own town. To my protest that it is far from the one I had in mind, they reply: 'Yes, but the fishman — why, everyone recognized him!' Well, it is true I did borrow an old fish peddler who used to go up and down their streets, crying his wares in an original strain.

Considerably more trying, however, is the suspicion which all we who write fiction labor under, that the experiences of our heroes or heroines must have been in large part our own. How else could we know some of these things? I myself was early made aware of the extent to which we must take on our own shoulders the sins of our creatures when I was told of a devout woman I had known in my childhood who, after reading my first novel, exclaimed: 'And to think the author was once in my Sunday-school class!'

Then there is another suspicion from which we suffer, the suspicion of our friends that sooner or later we may use them as copy. Eager — yes, urgent, as they often

are that we should portray certain mutual acquaintances, the last thing they desire, for all the poet's prayer, is to see themselves as others see them. Especially in a small place is a writer considered an unsafe person to have about. People whom we meet there are all more or less on their guard.

Another price we pay for becoming writers is in having our friends and relatives — alas, too often the latter! — consider it their bounden duty to tell us they do not approve of what we have written. There may be writers so fortunate they have never been subject to pricks of this sort, or so tough-fibred they fail to feel them. I doubt it. I myself certainly find it exceedingly exasperating when my cousin Georgiana writes, in regard to a novel of mine that has recently appeared, that she has to admit many of its happenings were 'entirely too sordid' for her taste. Do none of these candid folk realize that without exception what a writer turns out is so sickeningly below what he had hoped to achieve that he scarcely needs them to point out its deficiencies, especially when he has the professional critic to do this for him; above all, that the things he writes, however poor, are his children, whom, it is true, he has shamelessly exposed to the public view, but whose frailties it is no less painful to be reminded of than of those of his flesh-and-blood progeny?

Nor is there the least assurance of pleasing these captious familiars any better when we leave the always debatable ground of what is allowable in fiction and deliver ourselves through other channels. When a paper of mine entitled 'Babbitt's Big Brother' appeared, again it was my old friend Olympia who was the first to challenge the views I had expressed. 'For my part,' she wrote, 'I have no patience with labor. I don't mind admitting I am a thoroughgoing Bourbon.' As for my aunt Rebecca and my aunt Ellen, it is difficult to decide whether they are more shocked or saddened when they come upon my views on social problems, or see in print those touching religion, though I derive some comfort from the fact that the journals which harbor these opinions rarely find a place on my aunts' tables.

But there is a very different type from whom we are also pretty sure to hear. Of

these, one who comes to my mind first is, like Olympia, a lifelong friend. Unlike Olympia, however, Harriet is almost completely sympathetic with my social views. She seldom misses anything I write, or fails to be complimentary, but invariably she wishes to engage me in further discussion of what I have written. Sensitive as Harriet is, it is unthinkable to administer the slap which on occasion I have no hesitation in giving Olympia. Yet it is equally impossible to explain to Harriet that while she, a woman living on a comfortable (inherited) income, is formulating, in leisure, the questions which she says my 'stimulating' article has 'provoked,' already that train of thought — of six months or so ago — which she seeks to prolong is losing, for me, its sharp edges, and I am laboring on a very dissimilar article which I hope will take care of at least my taxes and insurance, both shortly due.

It is, to tell the truth, precisely with friends who are the most flattering about our work that we may be called upon to face some of our most acute embarrassments. With Harriet, for instance, merely to know I have begun a book starts her asking when it will be out, while if she learns I am trying my hand at a play, before I even have the script ready to offer she is not only prophesying the wildest success for it on Broadway, but envisioning its author living in royal state in Hollywood, on the profits sure to accrue 'when it goes into the movies.' On the whole, I am not sure but that I prefer one of Olympia's gloomy predictions.

It is this fable about profits that brings us, too, manuscripts from old and intimate friends who beg for our 'frank opinion' of their work. It is even more obnoxious, we perceive now, to give than to receive advice about writing. It is usually the choice between losing a friend or telling the truth, and all too often it is the truth which has to suffer. I was, in fact, astounded when my

friend Ernestine sent me her first story — Ernestine, who had always presented such brilliant papers before the club, and been so merciless in her judgments of even the most illustrious professional writers! Not that I really minded encouraging Ernestine, except for the time involved. It was with Mrs. Tracy I found myself in an almost tragic dilemma. One of the wittiest women I have ever known, and with no little ability in several practical lines, when, through one of those sharp reversals so common to-day, her husband's fortune was swept away, it occurred to her that by writing down some of those stories with which she was accustomed to convulse a whole roomful of people she could earn enough to support herself and her shattered husband through their remaining years. As the only author, she wrote, of her acquaintance, she turned to me, enclosing a sample — a story not only entirely formless, but utterly flat when separated from the woman's sparkling presence. I confess I dropped tears on her scribbled lines, but what could I tell her?

After a sleepless night, I replied that while my own opinion could not, of course, be accepted as final, and while undoubtedly she possessed some of the gifts without which few writers could hope to succeed, yet, considering the length of time necessary to master the technique, all the difficulties, I felt it would be unwise for her to count on writing as a source of income. My answer was as soft as I knew how to — or dared — make it. Yet she came back rather huffily, asking me please to return the story, as the editor of some woman's publication, whom she had met socially, was 'anxious to see it.' Furthermore, I do not believe that Mrs. Tracy has ever entirely forgiven me. Both she and Ernestine believe, I am confident, that somehow or other I am responsible for their lack of recognition in what they are still convinced is a profitable, as well as most pleasurable, profession.



# *The Atlantic*

## INDUSTRIAL PORTFOLIO

A STUDY OF 12 BASIC INDUSTRIES IN COOPERATION WITH

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GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION  
AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

GOODYEAR TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY, INC.  
RUBBER INDUSTRY

STANDARD OIL COMPANY OF NEW JERSEY  
OIL INDUSTRY

GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY  
ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

JOHNS-MANVILLE CORPORATION  
BUILDING MATERIALS

UNITED STATES STEEL CORPORATION  
STEEL INDUSTRY

LIBBEY-OWENS-FORD GLASS COMPANY  
GLASS INDUSTRY

CONTINENTAL CAN COMPANY, INC.  
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NORTON COMPANY  
ABRASIVE INDUSTRY

NATIONAL DAIRY PRODUCTS CORPORATION  
DAIRY PRODUCTS

KIMBERLY-CLARK CORPORATION  
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Each of the papers published in the series by Arthur Pound represents one chapter from the author's forthcoming book—INDUSTRIAL AMERICA: ITS WAY OF WORK AND THOUGHT. Of particular significance to ATLANTIC readers is the fact that, in preparing these articles and presenting them as advertising, Mr. Pound has been given every assistance by the staffs of these corporations in collecting his materials and in verifying his facts. His series of interpretations therefore have the distinction of being in every instance authenticated at the original source.

# GLASS ENTERS A NEW AGE

*Libbey-Owens-Ford Pioneers in Adapting an Old Industry to Modern Needs*

BY ARTHUR POUND\*

A HUNDRED years ago the United States Government wrote into the homestead law the provision that a four-paned glass window should be built into every cabin. Dedicated to improving the common lot of mankind, the young republic legislated against extending into new country the dark cabins of the colonial and pre-homestead era, some of which may still be found in backward regions. Glass is a civilizer, and it is significant that the first factory in the United States was a glassworks established near Jamestown, Virginia, in 1608.

Glassmaking is one of the oldest of the industrial arts. In our day it includes processes ranging from primitive to ultramodern, and products all the way from exquisite smallness to gigantic proportions. Here is an outstanding example of the rise of modern technics, not only because of the phenomenal advances in the art, but also because lowered costs and prices have brought an amazing expansion of the use of glass in new fields and markets. Once a luxury, glass is now a necessity, and the glass house of proverb has become reality. This transparent servant of light, which you see through rather than see, has a noble past, a dynamic present, and a future which enthalls the imagination.

\*Sixth in a series of advertisements on Industrial America: Its Way of Work and Thought.

As this ancient art developed into continuous large-scale production of the commoner forms of glass, both inventive genius and commercial vision were required. Particularly has this been true of the manufacture of flat glass, where new processes forced heavy capital investment in enormous plants and massive machine equipment. The march of the glass industry into new fields of public service and convenience, its competence in gaining new objectives by technical improvements, and its determination to reach new markets through advertising, are illustrated in the record and methods of Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company.

## I

The three names which this company perpetuates are those of men who pioneered this change in industrial processes. All three died between 1920 and 1925, their companies being merged in 1930. Each scored a distinguished business success, and each met fully the duties which the Middle West, perhaps more than any other section of America, lays on the doorstep of affluence. To become a leading citizen in that part of America, it is not enough that one shall merely make money; in addition to building a fortune, an industrial leader is also expected to build up his community and country, promote good

works for social betterment, and show a disposition, when necessary, to forgo the profits of to-day for the sake of the long-range future.

These three glassmakers of Toledo did all these things — each in his own way, however, for they were men of distinct and widely differing personalities. Edward Drummond Libbey, for instance, was a New Englander who, deciding to move westward his small glassworks from East Cambridge, Massachusetts, brought to Toledo in 1888 a deep background of cultural tradition. To older Americans his name is almost synonymous with cut glass, that beautiful expression of craftsmanship which reached a style peak in the nineties, largely as a result of Mr. Libbey's daring in exhibiting his manufacturing processes at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. This success established his company firmly, and as his fortune grew Mr. Libbey, true to the New England tradition, used it to promote education and art in his adopted city. The magnificent Toledo Museum of Art, housed in one of America's noblest buildings, is largely maintained by a Libbey endowment, contains many magnificent paintings collected by him, and in connection with the public schools conducts a notable educational plan in art and music. Its glass collection is one of the finest in the world, with specimens illustrating all the changes of technics from the sand-core glass of ancient Egypt to modern pieces. Especially notable are a small Egyptian ewer of 1350 B.C., the famous Nekias cup of about 100 B.C., and a Roman cameo vase of the same period, the two latter timing the change from sand-core to blown glass.

In contrast to Mr. Libbey, 'Mike' (Michael J.) Owens belonged to that rough-and-ready school of American industrialists who rose from shirt-sleeves to leadership by extraordinary

vigor in organization and invention. Coming out of the West Virginia hills poor but full of fight, he became a glass blower and labor representative in the Libbey factory. In a crisis in its affairs, Owens rose overnight to the superintendency, fired all hands immediately, and then rehired the more efficient members of the staff. His inventiveness resulted in the Owens bottle machine, which revolutionized bottle making by reducing to automatism an art which from time immemorial had required hand gathering of glass and blowing by human lung power into required shapes. His vision and courage are revealed in the part he played in bringing to practical performance the flat-drawing process, an equally revolutionary advance in window-glass manufacture, of which more later.

The third of the great Toledo glassmakers whose works are part of the Libbey-Owens-Ford heritage is Edward Ford, son of Captain J. B. Ford, America's pioneer plate-glass manufacturer. Edward Ford, retired as President of Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in 1896, resolved to establish a glassworks of his own. Toledo offered, then as now, certain sovereign advantages — trained labor, access by rail and water to markets, raw material, and cheap fuel. Purchasing 173 acres on the Maumee River adjoining Toledo, Mr. Ford began building the model town of Rossford for employee homes and constructing the largest plate-glass plant under one roof in the United States, with a capacity of 6,000,000 square feet per year, later doubled, and now six times its original capacity.

## II

As one views window glass coming out of the furnace in a glowing carpet at the world's largest window-glass factory in Charleston, West Virginia,

it is a little difficult to realize that this automatic progression from melting tank to cutting machine is so new. Its birthday can be fixed in 1916, when the ideas of Irving W. Colburn, based on observation of paper making, were brought into practical use after Messrs. Libbey and Owens had spent more than a million dollars in developing the process, the patent for which they had purchased in 1912 through their Toledo Glass Company.

To comprehend the revolutionary character of the flat-drawing process requires a description of older processes. Casting of flat glass, in mediæval times, produced artistic effects still revealed in cathedral windows, but flat casting never attained commercial possibilities because of variations of quality, smallness of panes, and high cost. Better practical results were obtained by blowing glass into spherical shapes, reheating, and rotating until there developed a disk of glass marred by a bull's-eye in the centre. America's centre of production was Boston, and 'Boston Crown glass' became a trade name in colonial America. After annealing, the disks were cut into small panes, those with the bull's-eye being used chiefly for transoms and door side-lights.

Larger panes resulted from another hand process involving exhausting physical labor and high skill, which came into general use early in the nineteenth century and continued to be the accepted method down to 1903. By repeated gatherings, blowings, and swingings of molten glass at the end of a heavy iron blowpipe, long cylinders were obtained, up to dimensions of twenty inches in diameter and seventy inches in length. The cylinders were then cut, reheated, and flattened; but the most skillful operatives could not bring to absolute flatness glass originally blown in cylinders. For this reason old window glass is slightly bowed

and gives a considerable degree of distortion. Size and quality were limited sharply by human capacities under tremendous strain, and progress awaited a mechanical method for eliminating lung power and muscular fatigue.

The first step in that direction substituted compressed air in the blowpipe for the lung power of the glass blower. This made possible the fashioning of larger cylinders and sheets at less cost; but flattening the cylinders continued to produce the same defect until Libbey-Owens came to the rescue with the first workable machine for producing commercial flat-drawn sheet glass. Consistently improved through the intervening years, this process is the heart of the Libbey-Owens-Ford window-glass factories at Charleston, West Virginia, and Shreveport, Louisiana, both situated in natural gas fields. The Shreveport plant is the most southerly glass factory in the country.

Preliminary operations are similar to those in other forms of glass manufacture, but they proceed on so vast a scale in these great plants that a visitor may be puzzled in correlating the simple 'shop' glassmaking of olden days with this vast, automatic manufacturing programme. From railway cars the raw materials are run up by cup elevators into huge circular concrete bins, like farm silos, but much larger. From these the ingredients of the 'batch' are drawn by gravity — so much silica sand, so much ground limestone, so much soda ash and salt cake. These are the chief ingredients which from time immemorial have been used in glassmaking, but real progress has been made in controlling the mixture in both purity of materials, exactness in proportion, and thoroughness in mixing. After these materials have been thoroughly mixed in a power hopper, the batch travels along a broad band to the furnaces on a conveyor system nearly a

quarter of a mile long, unloading being accomplished at any desired furnace. There, with a certain amount of cullet, or broken glass, it is fed into the furnace to be melted under a heat of approximately 2700 degrees Fahrenheit. Cullet, melting more quickly than the new materials, starts the liquefying of the mass and protects the sides of the tank from chemical action during the early stages. Even so the tanks must be frequently relined.

Eyes shielded against heat and glare by colored glass, the visitor peers through an observation hole into a tank of molten glass. What he beholds is a lake of glass five feet deep and more than a hundred feet long, but the optical effect is one of vast distances and weird, uncanny vistas. The colors of this lovely, ever-changing mirage are those not often seen on sea or land. Heat waves and convection currents explain the illusion of distance and the diffusion of light, but the layman will rest content with an unforgettable revelation of beauty.

This lake of glass in the great tank is ever being replenished at one end, and at the other end giving forth a broad carpet of white-hot, even-flowing metal. The endless carpet passes first through a chamber which cools the glass slightly by a short, sudden drop in temperature to toughen it in preparation for a straight upward pull to bending rollers, thence horizontally over flattening rollers, and into the lehr, for slow, thorough annealing. The powdered batch and broken cullet of a few hours ago have become fused into a solid transparent sheet; the white-hot fluid of an hour ago is now cool enough to be handled by cutters as it emerges from the lehr. The slow annealing possible under this flat-drawn process reduces internal strains and yields glass less brittle and hence more economically cut for glazing.

Glass cutting remains a skilled occu-

pation, both in the manipulation of the diamond-pointed cutting tools and in the avoidance of waste by quick mental calculation to decide how a large sheet of glass may be best reduced to merchantable sizes and qualities. But even in this branch of flat glassmaking, which has withstood mechanical inroads longer than the others, machine tools march on. At Charleston, machine cutting is the established practice on large-quantity orders, and the prospect is that it will supersede hand cutting to a large degree because of the machine's higher accuracy.

When you enter the great building few men are to be seen, which arouses the thought that men are being rapidly replaced by machines in this growing industry. Yet census statistics on manufactures show that 15,000 more wage earners were employed in making glass in 1929 than in 1899, a thirty-year period which includes all the major mechanical developments cited above. The answer to this apparent contradiction is to be found in the enormously increased use of glass due to decreasing prices, and cultivation of new markets for quantity-production glass. In this combined technical and commercial march of glass, labor shared to no small degree. The average annual wage in 1929 was two and one-half times that of 1899. Libbey-Owens-Ford hourly wages to-day are much higher than in 1929, and even annual wages are about equal to those of 1929 in spite of the shorter working day in effect under code regulations.

### III

So far we have been following window glass through the ultramodern flat-drawing process. Now let us consider plate glass, the 'blanks' for which can be made either by flat drawing, as at Charleston, or by the Bicherox or pot method, as at the Rossford plant



of Libbey-Owens-Ford at Toledo. In chemical content and physical form, window glass and plate glass may be identical; the difference between them is that plate glass must have further processing to produce the characteristics which give it superior market value. When window glass leaves the lehr, it does so as a finished article, requiring only washing, cutting, and inspection before being boxed for shipment, but when a plate-glass blank leaves the lehr it is still a 'blank,' semi-finished raw material requiring for completion even more work than has already gone into it. The blank must be ground and polished to close standards before it becomes plate glass ready for use as such, and these processes require both extreme care and large machinery investment.

On broad conveyors wider than flatcars and, like flatcars, moving on rails and in trains, the blanks, continuously bathed in water and sand which varies from coarse to fine, are carried under rotating grinders whose soft iron cores grind the corrugated surface away to parallel planes, thus eliminating distortion by taking off waves and surface irregularities. Then the conveyors carry the glass into the polishing machines, where, with soft iron oxide or 'rouge' as a mild abrasive, the glass is polished by felts rotating at high speed.

On the polishing line you will see an impressive example of that union of power and precision which distinguishes the whole machine setup of modern glass production. It is known to a nicety how long those massive polishers with their whirring felts are at their best. Consequently an automatic crane at regular intervals methodically brings from above a new polishing battery whose felts have been reconditioned, and slips this mighty tool into place without a break in the movement of the gigantic ensemble. When you consider

that this whole process is on a scale more massive than that of a railroad train, this marvelous timing seems a perfect triumph of factory engineering.

The surface, rather than content or thickness, distinguishes plate glass from window glass. The grinding and polishing of plate glass give superior clarity and uniformity of surface long recognized as a valuable factor in the manufacture of mirrors, in the display of goods in show windows and show-cases, and plate glass is coming more and more into use in substantial and dignified residences. The 'picture window,' a phrase coined by Libbey-Owens-Ford and adopted by architects to describe a window framing an outdoor view, requires plate glass because of its freedom from distortion.

The most dramatic moment in a plate-glass factory like that of Libbey-Owens-Ford at Rossford, where the Bicheroux or pot method is used, is, of course, 'the pour.' As the furnace doors open, the beautiful yet awful majesty of fire is revealed. An immense incandescent pot of clay, holding more than 1500 pounds of molten glass, travels from furnace to rolling machine on an overhead conveyor. The contents spill out white-hot when the pot is tripped, cascade down between large iron rollers, and then continue down an inclined plane to come to rest as a flat, orange-colored oval perhaps twelve feet across by forty feet long. Power knives trim the oval into a rectangle and bisect it; then a door is lifted and the two great rough plates or blanks enter the annealing chamber and lehr, 450 feet long, to emerge 100 minutes later cooled down to the handling point. Then the blank goes on its way to the cutters, grinders, and polishers. The eye has beheld the glory of fire, and the mind has rejoiced in the power of man's thought to harness those titanic forces to his service.

## IV

When automobile manufacturers, about fifteen years ago, began building closed cars, they opened an immense new market for themselves and for glassmakers as well. Motoring became an all-year-round activity instead of a fine-weather sport. The utility of the automobile doubled, and the public increased its purchase of closed cars until they now form more than 90 per cent of total automobile production. From the start the automobile trade demanded plate glass, because of its superior beauty and clearer vision. The glass industry was faced with a challenge and an opportunity greater than it had ever known, since the call was not only for more glass and better glass, but also for glass on urgent production schedules matching in dynamics those of the automobile industry itself, which does not wait for laggards.

Obviously the use of even the best quality of plate glass, in a moving vehicle subject to collision, brought risks to motorists as well as blessings. Ordinary glass splinters on breaking; a shower of glass fragments is always dangerous and, as statistics of motor accidents show, often fatal. A survey a few years before the more general adoption of safety glass showed that more than 45 per cent of all motorists injured in accidents were cut by broken, flying glass. The search for a glass which would give greater protection to motorists led directly to the large-scale development of laminated glass, now generally known as 'safety glass.'

Laminated or safety glass is a sandwich composed of two layers of glass, with a transparent layer of some tougher, more plastic material cemented between them. Early efforts to popularize safety glass failed because of the difficulty of finding a satisfactory

middle layer. Certain materials then available served well enough from the standpoint of strength when new, but colored and weakened with age. Absolutely clear materials were hard to get, and under the influence of the sun's rays cloudy and burned effects might soon appear which interfered with vision. Not until chemical engineers found means of producing plastic cellulose acetate from wood pulp or cotton at reasonable costs could the safety-glass trade reach its present proportions.

The laminating process is a delicate one requiring both high-quality glass and expert workmanship in assembly. After the plate-glass blanks have been ground, polished, and washed, they are cut to shape, coated with an invisible cement, and assembled with their in-between layer of cellulose acetate. Under great heat and pressure the three layers, two of glass and one of plastic, are welded together into a completed transparent sandwich. After being washed and dried, it is dipped in acetone, which softens the edges of the plastic middle layer to the proper depth to allow for routing out and making room for weatherproofing the edges. All edges are then sealed, ground, and polished to finished form, and after a final bath and inspection the completed product goes on its way to the automobile body builder.

The advantages of laminated glass have long been recognized. Visibility is unimpaired, and flexibility and strength have been gained. Safety glass may crack under severe impact, may even break, but the likelihood of cuts from glass is greatly reduced, as the glass tends to adhere to the centre sheet of plastic. However, it was not until quantity production and improved plastic permitted great economies and betterments that the advantages of lamination became available to millions of users. Intricate problems of design

and manufacture had to be solved in laminated glass production, yet the cost of complete equipment in an automobile is unbelievably small. Nearly all automobile manufacturers provide safety glass as standard equipment, and the rest offer it all-round as an option at approximately \$10 for the average small car. At present more than half of all America's motor cars are registered in states which have legislated in favor of safety glass, and 75 per cent of all new cars are being equipped with the protective material. With the continued encouragement of motor-vehicle bureaus and state legislatures, and the coöperation of the manufacturers, 100 per cent use of safety glass in the nation's automobiles is in sight. The leading bus operators have already seen the wisdom of using safety glass throughout their fleets, even in areas where no legislation is in effect.

Outside of the automobile field safety glass is making headway. All airplanes are now completely equipped, and the trend to safety glass is on in other public conveyances where passengers must accept risks not of their own choosing. The recent Century of Progress Exhibition at Chicago developed another use, exhibitors using it to protect their goods from theft in locations where close attendance by employees was impossible. Other uses will develop, as is always the case when a formerly expensive product becomes available at low cost through improved processes and quantity manufacture.

## V

Emphasis on the safety principle in glassmaking led Libbey-Owens-Ford into another departure in research and experimentation. After obtaining the rights to manufacture in America 'tempered' glass, a French development, and improving that process, the

Company now is beginning to produce a glass which of itself possesses exceptional tensile strength and marked safety features. In the laboratories at Toledo the visitor can see a glass ball weighing nearly two pounds drop from a height of eight to ten feet, strike a pane of glass, and rebound without leaving a mark. When the pane finally breaks under greater impact, it shatters into rather harmless granular fragments, some of them no more than powder, the breaking process being that of crystallization rather than splintering. You can usually dash a piece of this tempered or toughened glass on a tile floor without damage. Two men can stand on a strip of this glass, which bends under their weight like a wooden board and then returns to normal position. In *Popular Mechanics*, Edward Teale says that a large sheet of this glass, one inch thick, will support a three-ton truck.

Tempered glass is made by reheating plate glass in electric furnaces, then suddenly cooling it by special application of air blasts. Europe is using this kind of glass for many safety purposes. Thus far Libbey-Owens-Ford has found markets for tempered glass chiefly in portholes for naval vessels, for which it seems to be ideally suited. Its use is also 'indicated,' as the doctors say, for table tops, mirrors, plaques, shelves, oven doors, showcases, and perhaps even show windows.

## VI

In the new age of glass so successfully inaugurated in the last few years, no single new exhibit arouses more interest than another Libbey-Owens-Ford product — Thermopane. This consists of two sheets of glass separated by a uniform dehydrated air space, the union being maintained at the edges by a dust-proof bond. Like laminated glass, Thermopane is a sandwich, but

the filler is air instead of plastic. There is no decline in visibility. Until one examines the edges he is unaware that he is looking through two panes of glass instead of one, and it can be glazed in regular sash.

The advantages of Thermopane are such that it is displacing ordinary windowpanes in many better-class homes and apartment buildings. Air being one of the best nonconductors, Thermopane keeps out summer heat and in winter makes possible high fuel savings, estimated at 25 per cent. It also materially reduces street noises, which have grown to nuisance proportions in many cities. Thermopane is ideal for glazing air-conditioned structures, carrying control of interior conditions one step further, and considerations of quiet and health suggest it for hospitals, schools, and other buildings of a public and semipublic nature.

## VII

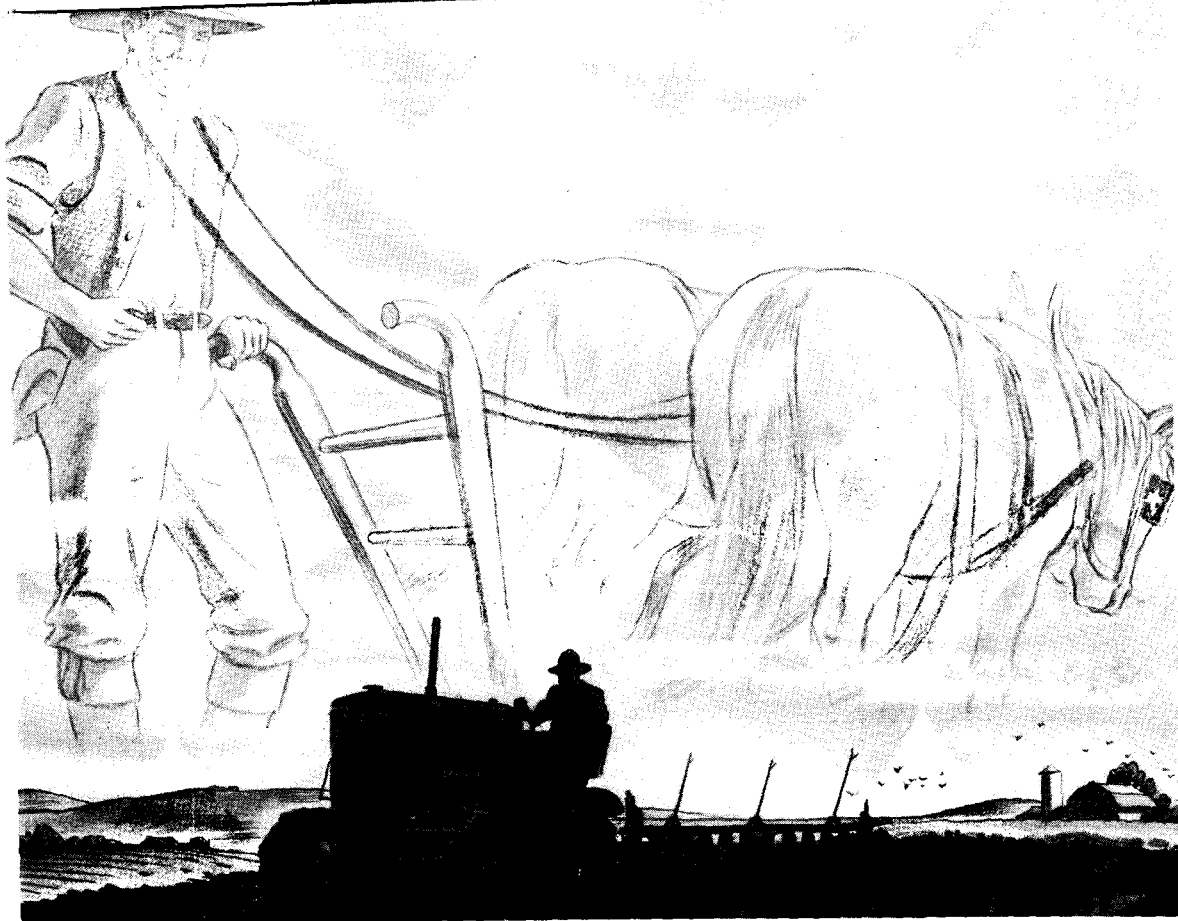
Behind the Libbey-Owens-Ford organization, with its six huge plants engaged in making flat glass in enormous quantity by the most modern mechanical process, stands a great tradition. Its founders, in three distinct fields, led American glassmakers to new heights of accuracy and efficiency. Their successors, a group of men young in years but old in experience, most of whom have been in the glass business since youth, are taking a leading and constructive rôle in developing the new age of glass, one of the decisive phases in the revitalizing of American industry. They met the depression

head-on and checked it, as far as their particular business was concerned, by finding new uses for old products, developing new products through research, and creating a desire for those products in the minds of the public through steady and intelligent advertising. The result has been more employment. Libbey-Owens-Ford payrolls, both in numbers employed and in wages paid, have been going from one new high to another month by month, in contrast to swings in the opposite direction in many other lines.

One sees in the recent history of this company the creation of a new large-scale industry — the manufacture of safety glass — and also a conscious acceptance of the responsibility laid upon industry to develop and popularize new products as a major contribution to industrial recovery. Internal developments such as these react definitely on the public welfare, and, being firmly grounded in economies, their cumulative effects are certain to be more enduring than external influences, arising outside industry, can ever be.

The Libbey-Owens-Ford Company's record in the last five years has been a dramatic denial of pessimism, as it has proceeded to develop, through new ideas and vigorous management, the great possibilities latent in the ancient art of glassmaking. Even in a period of general hesitancy, the policy of courage which dictated progress in adaptations, research, and determined salesmanship won public acceptance from a people always eager for substantial improvements in the goods necessary to civilized living.

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# Petroleum speeds the Plow

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## THE CONTRIBUTORS' COLUMN

OF **Sacha Guitry's** life ('Off Stage and On') the first event in time is first in importance: the son of actor parents, he was born in the glare of the footlights. Readers who have seen him in the theatre, especially the theatre of his native Paris, or who have read his sparkling *pièces de théâtre*, will be primed to enjoy his memoirs, of which this is the first of four gay installments. Δ Universities 'In Order of Their Eminence.' **Edwin R. Embree**, as an officer of Yale University for six years, as a director and vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation for a decade, and as president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, has had intimate opportunities to acquaint himself with American universities; in this challenging discussion he hazards more than a guess when he lists them in the order of their scholarly eminence. **Vera Brittain** speaks with equal authority to and of 'Listeners English and American.' She is known even in places where her extensive lecture tours have not taken her because of her impressive autobiographical study, *Testament of Youth*. Δ Turn to 'The Literary Worker's Polonius' for such advice as that shrewd, exasperating old counselor would have given had he been engaged in 'literary pursuits.' **Edmund Wilson**, poet, novelist, onetime editor of the *New Republic*, penetrating critic of *Axel's Castle*, has his own definite ideas of the natures, duties, and attitudes of which he writes.

Since the appearance of his first story in last July's *Atlantic*, **William Wister Haines** has published *Slim*, a novel about linemen such as the protagonists of 'Hot Behind Me,' and is now superintending its metamorphosis in Hollywood. During his college years he supported himself by 'line work' on wood-pole and steel-tower transmission and railroad electrification. **George B. Roberts**, vice president of the National City Bank of New York, voices in this paper the common sense of informed opinion. Δ 'Glory,' an unpublished poem on war as seen by **Emily Dickinson**, was sent to the *Atlantic Monthly* by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi. Δ Probably no essay has ever been more widely read and loved than 'Turtle Eggs for Agassiz,' which the late professor of English at Boston University, **Dallas Lore Sharp**, contributed to the *Atlantic* in 1910. 'A Bed in the Museum' adds a footnote to the immortal tale, and is itself a gem of portrai-

ture. Δ 'A Tale of Three Cities' is **Glanville Smith's** farewell to the Antipodes, from which he returned last February to resume his trade of tombstone designer in Cold Spring, Minnesota. **Catharine Morris Wright** ('Smoke') is by profession a painter. She proffers this picture of herself: 'I live on a farm and spend my time writing, mornings; painting, afternoons; walking or playing music, evenings; and have a jolly time.'

**J. O. P. Bland** writes of China's drug traffic ('Opium for the World') with the authority which characterizes all of his pronouncements on China's complex problems. **George Libaire** ('Heritage') was for several years on the faculty of St. Stephen's College, and later was associate professor of English at Columbia. **James L. Mursell** ('The Miracle of Learning') is professor of education at Lawrence College and has published several volumes on education in general and on music in particular. Δ 'The Return' is a story in **Lord Dunsany's** happiest vein of fantasy. Δ 'Culture and Laissez-Faire' continues the study of *America in Search of Culture* which **William Orton**, professor of economics at Smith College, published two years ago. **Walter Prichard Eaton** ('The Professor Goes to Lunch'), after a fruitful career as dramatic critic, lecturer, and author of numerous books, has recently joined the staff of Yale University, in the Department of Drama. **Arthur Pound** ('The Atlantic Portfolio of Industry') has contributed authoritative industrial papers to the *Atlantic* for a decade and a half.

/ / /

If this be heresy . . .

Dear Atlantic, —

Mr. Nock's article on 'The Missing Link' hinted at stupendous implications for religion if his contentions were true.

I believe they are true. Why, then, all this pother on the part of us ministers because the masses do not attend church? They are not up to it, that's all. And why debase our gospel until it becomes nothing more nor less than an appeal for a full dinner pail? Demos is interested in the church only as the church fights its battles for a full belly. The church has been made a cat's-paw to hook its chestnuts out of



## Here Wheat Gives Up Its Secrets

HERE, in a modern laboratory dedicated to research, secluded from the noise and bustle of mighty flour mills, a group of the world's foremost cereal chemists, calmly, patiently, thoroughly, study wheat and every phase of milling and baking for just one purpose—to improve the products of General Mills, Inc., and thereby improve the bread and other baked wheat foods for your table.

Time and again in recent years these laboratory doors have opened to reveal formulae and processes for profitable new products and other secrets which make for better flour, better baking.

For the baker: the Fermaured process, one of the reatest steps forward, which uarantees uniformity in akers' doughs and uniformly od bread from day to day.

For the home: Bisquick, the amazing labor- and time-saving combination of ingredients which produces perfect biscuits and many other delicacies every time the housewife uses it—a triumph of research after years of patient effort.

And many less spectacular but vitally important results of continuous scientific research, such as photometric control of flour color, and the determination of improved techniques for analyzing wheat and flour in the control laboratory of each mill.

Every dollar expended in this work of research helps to produce the very finest flour, the very finest bread.

*(To be continued in the July Issue)*



*Some well known General Mills brands*

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the fire. But the Social-Gospelers have not yet discovered this.

Another implication of Mr. Nock's article is, why make such ado about charity? I believe that already thirty cents out of every tax-dollar in Massachusetts, for instance, goes to support the insane, the moron, and the criminal. And with the soak-the-rich policy now in the saddle in Washington, the thrifty and competent are being still further penalized. How long can this go on before society becomes so waterlogged with the incompetent that it can no longer keep afloat? I believe in charity, but my own personal charity has become restricted to those who have some spiritual sensitiveness. I no longer give charity to the Neolithic man.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Cram and Mr. Nock for giving us a rationale for tightening our purse strings against drives to help those who, if kept alive, will simply go on propagating their kind, thereby making it harder for the decent and the competent and the thrifty to survive.

If this be heresy, let who will make the most of it.

HOWARD J. CHIDLEY, D.D.

First Congregational Church  
Winchester, Massachusetts

### The barnyard point of view.

Dear Atlantic, —

On reading 'The Quest of the Missing Link,' contributed to your April issue by Albert Jay Nock, I could not help wondering whether the view there expressed is pose or parallax. However, that is not denying that the average man, in many respects, is more beastly than the brute. Perhaps this is the way the so-called lower animals would size up the situation: —

The beasts once came together to decide  
Which was the most important in the land.  
The lion and the tiger claimed command  
Because they both had eaten man. Their pride  
Was great that man and others that abide  
On earth were made for them. That fact should  
stand,

Since it was certainly decreed and planned  
That man should be their food, by Heaven supplied.  
But horses, cattle, goats and sheep and swine,  
The dogs and cats and all domestic fowls  
Demurred at this, since man was just their slave.  
Feeding and housing them, as was divine  
Foreordination, and whoever growls  
Thereat is infidel and arrant knave.

F. A. Wood  
La Jolla, California

### Tugwell and Bryce.

Dear Atlantic, —

I suppose that when the *Atlantic* publishes a partisan political article such as Dr. Tugwell's it counts the cost in terms of the correspondence it invites.

The American story since the Civil War leaves Dr. Tugwell dissatisfied. He would have builded differently.

Thirty-five years ago James Bryce closed the third edition of his *American Commonwealth* with these words: 'That America marks the highest level, not only of material well-being, but of intelligence and happiness, which the race has yet attained, will be the judgment of those who look not at the favored few for whose benefit the world seems hitherto to have framed its institutions, but at the whole body of the people.'

This observation could have been truthfully repeated during most, if not all, of the intervening years. I had an idea that the achievement was 'the direct and logical outcome of certain ways of doing things.'

It is true we have not found a way to thwart the operation of Newton's third law, which seems somehow to apply to business as to the physical world. It is related in Genesis that Pharaoh was confronted with the problem of the cycle. Joseph, who possessed the gift of prophecy, knew the duration and worked out a solution satisfactory to Pharaoh if not to his people.

Now Dr. Tugwell has a solution. He says it involves changing the ways of doing things, but the constructive part of his substituted plan lacks definition. On February 18, Justice McReynolds said from the bench, 'The guarantees to which men and women heretofore have looked to protect their interests have been swept away.' Does this alone tend to ensure 'the good life'? Scott Nearing (who was Dr. Tugwell's tutor at Pennsylvania) is candid. His purpose needs no further clarification. Just what does Dr. Tugwell intend? If a 'higher law' has been unfolded to the intellectuals, why not translate the vision into words with some exactness? Then, indeed, we might explore the boundaries of chaos and plumb its depths without so great risk of stepping in unawares during this moment of distraction.

SUBSCRIBER  
Buffalo, New York

### We who are about to die.

Dear Atlantic, —

Allow me the use of your columns for a little chat with the young lady in 'The Art of Dying,' because we have something in common.

My tenure is a little more indefinite than yours, but for no special reason the men in my genealogical inventory have had a rapid turnover. I might still beat you to the wire. When the time comes, I hope I shall be as terrified as you — although I do believe that you are a little premature. The gamut of human emotions has a nadir as well as a zenith. If we would have an infinite capacity for joy and happiness, we must be prepared to probe the uttermost depths of suffering, terror, and despair. That is the stuff a full life is made of. The lower you descend the scale of human intelligence, the less terrifying death becomes.

Again like yourself, I too am sailing without an anchor to windward. Intellectual honesty compels some of us to reject immortality in the commonly accepted sense. In a personality thus constituted, you can always expect to find an intense love for



# GLASS

**A**ND still another industry dependent on modern abrasives — the making of plate glass for your automobile, and the many other familiar uses — mirrors, windows, display cases.

From the rough state left by the casting process, abrasive grain reduces the surface to a perfect plane which glass makers term a "smooth."

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humanity. For, with oblivion ahead, the chief purpose of life becomes to live in harmony and happiness with one's fellow men and to contribute something toward their advancement. But you shall attain immortality in a more important and unselfish sense. Those hereditary characteristics which make you a precursor of a nobler race will survive in your children and those who follow. Is that a mean contribution? A monument would not add to its dignity nor better define its quality.

W. M. J. McCLURE  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

### Evidently there are crows and crows.

Dear Atlantic, —

The article in the April *Atlantic* by Charlton Ogburn, Jr., entitled 'The Crow,' was a very good story, but it showed only one side of a crow's true nature.

I too have observed crows closely, in the wild state as well as in the tame. For example, I took Jimmy, my last tame crow, for long trips into a wilderness rarely visited by man, where he became extremely companionable. Of course he did make us watch our forks and spoons. In the spirit of fun he would swoop down and grab one, for he knew it meant that a game of 'hide and go seek' would follow. Off to a deep cedar clump a hundred feet to the north of our camp he would fly. There he would alight, and then the game would begin. When he became tired of the sport, he would give back the spoon or fork.

Jimmy's presence attracted a flock of from four to five hundred curious crows with whom he became very friendly. Sometimes he would fly miles with them, being most of the time the centre of interest. But he always returned to us, his foster guardians, particularly at mealtime.

Of course he did have his bad spells. He would attack on sight any person who had ever teased him. Once I found twelve newly killed frogs in one of his hiding places. Sometimes he would insist on roosting on our tent all night, and would be very indignant at being pushed off. But, in this letter, I merely want to stress the fact that a crow is not a wicked soulless creature all the time.

ARTHUR MAY, JR.  
Belleville, Ontario

### Golfers, keep your eye on the ball.

Dear Atlantic, —

Charlton Ogburn, Jr.'s interesting narration of his experiences with a tame crow and the bird's utter lack of propriety and decency recalls to mind a rather exasperating encounter several years ago in which the crow was decidedly the victor. The avidity of a member of this species for new golf balls had long been a subject of conversation among devotees of the sport at Virginia Beach, but was seldom given credence by other than actual eyewitnesses to his depredations.

The fourteenth hole of the Princess Anne golf course caused much wrath and profanity among golfers who disregarded the advice of sager heads. A 200-yard drive with a new missile, regardless of how

perfectly executed, frequently resulted in a lost ball. An old crow which perched, seeing but unseen, in a tree near the 200-yard marker, waiting for the uninitiated, would swoop down on the shiny white pellet and carry it away to parts unknown amid the curses of its owner and the benedictions of the owner's opponents. Only duffers and those who used discolored balls, which were beneath the old thief's notice, escaped him.

One of the members of our foursome forewarned us about this wily bird when we were approaching the fourteenth tee. We ignored his counsel, but he wisely drove an old ball down the fairway without mishap. His partner, who had been most vociferous in decrying his advice, made a beautiful 220-yard drive with a brand-new Kroffite golf ball, the kind we all used because of its imperviousness to poorly directed iron strokes. The ball had hardly come to rest in the soft turf when a black gawky shape descended rapaciously upon it and bore away another 'egg' for his nest, disdaining the blatant vituperation of its onetime owner and the raucous laughter and derisive jeers of the remaining members of the foursome.

According to the golf-course attendants, the old robber does not harass any fairway other than the fourteenth, and rumor has it that one of the club caddies found a crow's nest not far distant full of new golf balls. Many members of the club advocated annihilation of this feathered highwayman, but those with a keener sense of humor considered him one of the course hazards. Probably he is still causing consternation among unsuspecting golfers who play the Princess Anne course.

WILLIAM H. TRAPNELL  
Richmond, Virginia

### Minute Pudding.

Dear Atlantic, —

I wish to thank you for giving us Mrs. Lutes's delightful article, 'The Simple Epicure,' in the March *Atlantic*. Reading it brought back vividly my own childhood in Southern Michigan. And for the first time, I believe, a recipe for minute pudding appeared in print.

A story that has been handed down at least four generations in my family centres round this same dessert. Each time I tell it I am asked by someone how the pudding was made. One friend, after I had described the lumpy mass made of flour and water, suddenly seemed to visualize it and exclaimed, 'Oh yes, like paperhangers' paste — not properly made.' And that does describe it very well.

But the story. Long ago, in the period when this country was being settled, a man took his son to a farmer with whom he had made arrangements to bind him out. As the father was leaving he said to his son's new master, who was Holland Dutch: 'My son will eat everything but minute pudding.'

When they came in to supper after working all the afternoon, the one food the lad found on the table was the detested minute pudding. The family made their meal of it, but the boy would not so much as taste it. He went to bed hungry, and when he was awakened before daybreak (quaint ideas of what





# When *speed* gets beyond Control

Greek mythology tells us the story of what happens when speed and power get beyond control. Phaëthon, mortal son of the God Apollo, induces his father to let him drive the chariot of the Sun. Lacking the strength and ability of his mighty parent, he is unable to govern the powerful horses and is hurled to destruction.

**U**NGOVERNED, motion becomes a terrible engine of destruction. To serve man, it must be at his instant command. Split-second control must rule the swift flight of the motor vehicle, the giant strength of the locomotive, the brute power of countless machines.

Great has been the progress of engineers in the science of making things go. But there remained another science

to master, equally important—that of making things stop.

For over a half-century, Johns-Manville—pioneers in the development of Friction Materials that CONTROL MOTION—has contributed to the safety and efficiency of the machine age. Wherever machinery has to be governed, *stopped*, there you may find a Johns-Manville product on the job.

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constituted a working day obtained in those days) he was ravenously hungry.

After chores came breakfast, and, to his dismay, again the only food on the table was minute pudding. Famished though he was, however, he still refused to eat the dish against which he was so prejudiced.

Another half day of hard work, and again they gathered round the family board. Again minute pudding was the only food provided. By this time the lad's hunger had increased until with no ado he quietly finished the bowl of pudding given him, found it was n't too bad, and asked for another and even a third.

When they were arising from the table, the old Dutchman, with an air of relief, said: 'Vell, vell, dat is goot. Now you haf learned to eat minute pudding, we can haf somedings else.'

MARY R. REYNOLDS  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### Lines from Edmund Gosse.

Dear Atlantic, —

I enclose a few lines that seem to me so beautiful that I wish they might be given more publicity than they had in the volume where I found them. They were written by Edmund Gosse, and, although they bring a pang, one cannot help thinking that it would be far worse never to have had any reason to feel that way.

Last night I woke and found between us drawn —  
Between us, where no mortal fear may creep —  
The vision of Death dividing us in sleep;  
And suddenly I thought, Ere light shall dawn  
Some day, the substance, not the shadow of Death  
Shall cleave us like a sword. The vision passed  
But all its new-born horror held me fast,  
And till day broke I listened for your breath.  
Some day to wake and find that colored skies  
And pipings in the woods, and petals wet  
Are things for memory to forget;  
And that your living hands and mouth and eyes  
Are part of all the world's old histories! —  
Dear God! a little longer, ah, not yet! —

EARL P. HAYNES  
Bay Shore, New York

### In praise of the avocado.

Dear Atlantic, —

Why should your Contributor in his panegyric on hors d'œuvres go out of his way to heap obloquy on one of Florida's most delectable products? He disqualifies himself as a critic by not even knowing its name. 'Alligator pear' was a term applied to the wild native product from the roughness of its skin, but no one would think of applying it to the smooth-skinned fruit known to the cognoscenti as avocado. If he does not like avocados it is his misfortune. Possibly he has never seen them as they should be served. So I will tell him — and others — how to enjoy this ambrosial feast.

Cover a plate with crisp lettuce leaves. Peel an avocado and cut it into crescent-shaped slices. In each crescent — like the old moon in the arms of the

new — place a segment of grapefruit. The cool greenness of this salad will delight the eye. Prepare a French dressing, — never mayonnaise, — adding piquancy to it with the juice of a lime or lemon. Cream the dressing by beating with a fork over a lump of ice, and pour liberally over the avocado and grapefruit. Anyone who does not like this does n't know What's What even though his name may be in *Who's Who*.

P. H. H.  
Coconut Grove, Florida

### A word to the young.

Dear Atlantic, —

The Reverend Otis Moore, of Tipton, Iowa, writes to the Contributors' Column about a promising young friend of his, and wants to know how, in these days, he can afford to go to college. If he really wants a college education, he has more chance of obtaining it than young Franklin had. Franklin was born in 1706, in a day of the most meagre opportunity. Although he was born in Boston, no one wrote about him to the *Atlantic Monthly* to tell that paper that he had graduated with honors. Actually, he kept on graduating with honors every day until he died. He had an 'Open Sesame' — 'Time is the stuff that Life is made of' — and he did not waste his time. In this he differed from most of us. His Life and Letters, somewhat overlooked in these days of Phi Beta Kappas, are available and inspiring.

Another man, an obscure English poacher of small opportunities, found sermons in stones and books in the running brooks. He too succeeded in life, but of his personal career little is known.

If Mr. Moore's young friend knew his Shakespeare and his Franklin, he could keep his feet on the ground and his head among the stars.

ROLAND C. ASHBROOK  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### A question of paternity.

The polylinguistic squib recently appearing in the *Atlantic* has a devious paternity, as many letters prove. We think, however, that the original ancestor has now come to light.

Dear Atlantic, —

The verses referred to by Mr. Hefferan in the April 'Contributors' Column' will be found in *The Comic Latin Grammar*, London, Charles Tilt, ed. 2, 1840, p. 152. The 'portrait of the author' by John Leech, who illustrated the book, gives his name as 'Prendergest,' whether correctly or not I cannot verify at the moment. The verses run as follows: —

Patres conscripti — took a boat and went to Philippi.  
Trumpeter unus erat qui coatum scarlet habebat,  
Stormum surgebat, et boatum overset-ebat,  
Omnes drownerunt, quia swimaway non potuerunt,  
Excipe John Periwig tied up in the tail of a dead pig.

There is a good illustration by Leech.

MASON HAMMOND  
Boston, Massachusetts



## AN ENGINEERING POLICY OF PLEASING YOU . . . AS WELL AS OURSELVES!

**I**T is not surprising that you find such a wealth of variety of engineering practice among the six General Motors cars.

You can trace the reason to the homely observation, for example, that not all men want a double-breasted suit—or a brown one.

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The result is, you have opportunity for choice in the things *you* want, in the line of General Motors cars.

★ From more than a million letters sent out by our Customer Research Staff, we know that a vast majority of car owners agree in wanting the basic improvements found on all General Motors cars, such as No-Draft Ventilation—Knee-Action—streamlined beauty—synchro-mesh transmission or adjustable front seats. But when it comes to a preference in such matters as engine types for instance, the percentages run like this: 6-cylinder, 47.7%—straight-8, 29.3%—V-eight, 20.5%—4-cylinder, 1.5%—12-cylinder, 2%—V-sixteen, .5%

You can have L-head or valve-in-head engines—six, eight, twelve or sixteen cylinders—cable, power-booster or hydraulic brakes—updraft or downdraft carburetors—even open or enclosed type Knee-Action.

We're not so much interested in being narrowly consistent for its own sake, as we are in serving *you*.

We'd much rather build the best car you can buy for the money—by making full use of the skill and fertility of the largest automotive engineering staff in the world, and keeping watchful of the range and progress of the people's desires.

*Facts like these do more than confirm progressive leadership; they tell you why your choice should be a General Motors car—product of the foremost engineering, scientific and technical ability in the industry, and of a policy which solicits THE PUBLIC INTEREST as its inspiration and its guide*

# GENERAL MOTORS

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### Signs of the Orient.

Dear Atlantic, —

In the Peak Tram, Hongkong: NO CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF TWELVE YEARS, TRAVELLING IN THIS CAR, IS PERMITTED TO OCCUPY A SEAT DIRECTLY ADJOINING THE EXTERNAL AIR (meaning next to a door or window).

Hongkong's leading sanitary engineer (plumber to you) is LEE KEE.

A Chinese shop in Java displays this sign: —

AGENT FOR STANDARD OIL COMPANY

DEALER IN  
PROVISION GROCERY  
AND  
DRUNKENNESS

F. H. TYSON  
Hongkong, China

### Things of beauty.

Dear Atlantic, —

One who is responsive to the delicate things of the heart must have been deeply moved by the contributions in recent issues of your magazine on things of beauty.

I wonder if your readers are familiar with this lovely paragraph from John Galsworthy's *Candelabra*: —

'When any one of us has seen, or heard, or read that which is beautiful he has known an emotion precious and uplifting. A choir boy's voice, a ship in sail, an opening flower, a town at night, a lovely poem, leaf shadows, the stars at night, sheep bells on a hill, the crescent moon, the thousand sights, or sounds, or words, that wake in us the thought of beauty — these are the drops of rain that keep the human spirit from death by drought. How little savor there would be left in life if beauty were withdrawn! It is the smile on the earth's face, and needs but eyes to see, the mood to understand.'

WILBER W. MCKEE, D.D.  
Northbrae Methodist Church  
Berkeley, California

### Opportunity knocks but once.

Dear Atlantic, —

As a reader of the *Atlantic* since my school days, may I take the liberty of asking if you would assist my friend and me by publishing this letter.

We are planning a trip from the Andes to the Atlantic, via the Amazon, in June or July next, with the object of hunting, taking photos, writing, and sketching, and we wish to get in touch with a couple of young North Americans — girls or men — who might care to accompany us. We are Englishmen, aged twenty-two and twenty-seven years respectively, and at present are line officers serving with the Bolivian forces in the Chaco war against Paraguay.

We plan to travel down the Andes and Cordilleras by train and mules to the Bolivian jungles, thence by mule, canoe, and launch via the headwaters of the Amazon and the Amazonas to the Atlantic coast.

This trip could be of from three months' to a year's duration, and of course we are quite prepared to modify our plans to some extent in order to suit the convenience of whoever may accompany us. With good companions it should be very interesting and enjoyable, and comparatively cheap. We estimate the cost to be about \$250 each, or less, according to the time occupied.

For ourselves, we make good comrades, know the greater part of Bolivia, and expect to have the coöperation of the Bolivian Government, and probably of the Brazilian Government. If your readers are interested, I should be glad to hear from them at my permanent address below.

STTE. FRANK M. JONES  
% Estado Mayor Auxiliar  
La Paz, Bolivia, South America

### Another cause of accidents.

Dear Atlantic, —

I have read with much interest the articles by Curtis Billings in your September and April issues and should like to add a word of comment. Mr. Billings goes into considerable detail describing the various causes of automobile accidents, but he does not mention the auto radio as a serious factor.

I operate a filling station at the edge of the city, and I know of several near-by accidents that were caused by the radio in the car. Every good driver knows that his entire attention is needed on the road as long as the car is in motion. If a driver is rolling along at a good clip and listening to a broadcast in which he is particularly interested, his attention is bound to be centred more on the radio than on the road.

Many people defend the auto radio by saying that it is a great comfort to have something to occupy the mind on long stretches of monotonous road. That is true enough. But most radios are in cars owned by city people who seldom leave town. I am a radio enthusiast myself, but nothing could induce me to put one in my car.

ALLAN G. HELM  
Rockford, Illinois

### Keats as a political philosopher.

Dear Atlantic, —

Please refer to Mr. Charles D. Stewart's article, 'The Colors of Nature,' November *Atlantic*. The last paragraph of section VI closes with these words: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." And sometimes I have wondered whether Keats did not say even more than he was aware of when he produced that line.

Probably. Keats was like that. Witness these lines from the same source: —

A mad pursuing of the fog-born elf  
Whose flitting lantern through rude nettle-brier,  
Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,  
Into the bosom of a hated thing.

Could there be found words more descriptive of certain world-wide tendencies obtaining to-day?

ALEXANDER H. HOLLIDAY  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania